

Mantra, Japa, Yantra, Tantra

As envisioned in the Upanishads & other Scriptures of Hinduism

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English Exposition by:-

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Mantra, Japa, Yantra and Tantra

Mantra:-

While going through the Upanishads and other scriptural Texts of Hinduism, we come across the word 'Mantra' repeatedly. What are they? In a lay-man's language, as we have seen, Mantras are either a single letter, a syllable or a group of letters or syllables forming a word, a group of words, even a phrase or a short statement— which we can call a 'spiritual formulae'. They are a unique and potentially uplifting, energy-charged thought currents. These currents are transformed into words to make them useable and accessible. For the purpose of God-realisation (or realisation of the supreme Brahm), these Mantras are used in meditation repeatedly to help concentrate the mind. These are called Mantras because by proper contemplation on their import, they are able to remove the inner obstacles and facilitate realisation. They are catalysts or mediums for realisation. They help in reaching of the supreme Advaitic ideal of identifying the Atma with the Brahm, the individual self with the universal Self. The Mantras are the vehicles used during Japa (repetition of the holy name of the Lord) also.

The Atharva Veda's *Hayagriva Upanishad*, verse nos. 18-19 tell us how the Mantras should be repeated during Japa, and the importance of the Mantras in helping the spiritual aspirant reach the ecstasy of spiritual realisation by citing the example of the snake and the sound of the Indian lute.

“verse no. 18 = The Mantras should be pronounced clearly by employing the lips, the nose, the teeth, etc. [This is because some class of letters are pronounced by the involvement of the lips, such as Sanskrit letters 'Pa' (as in pump), 'Pha' (as in fruit), 'Ba' (as in bulb) etc.; others require the involvement of the nose, such as the letters 'Na' (as in nut), or the teeth, as in the case of the letter 'Da' (as in then), or the tongue as in the case of the other letters such as 'Ta' (as in two, teeth) and 'Cha' (as in choke) etc.]

The Mantras should be said continuously, in an unbroken stream of words and letters so that they appear to be like a wheel in motion. The worshipper should offer his prayers to Ishan (the Lord, the Supreme Being) in this way.

[It ought to be noted here that while verse nos. 16-17 emphasis that the Gods offer their prayers to the Supreme Being in a series of sounds, viz. like the neighing of a horse, the man is supposed to offer the same prayer of the Vedas in articulate language. This is the case if he is not an expert in classical forms of music so that he can sing the hymns in the typical way the Gods had sung them. So such a worshipper articulately pronounces the words of the hymns. But the continuous pronouncing gives the Mantra a subtle hue of music because of the rhythm and tone involved in the incantation.

'Ishan' means an emblem ('Nishan') of the Lord ('Isha'). The implication is simple—when a worshipper offers prayers or obeisance to Lord Hayagriva or even his own Atma, he

is actually honouring the Supreme Being known as 'Brahm'. All other forms and deities to whom worship is offered are actually emblems of Brahm; they stand for Brahm.] (18).

“verse no. 19 = The creator and controller of this creation has established this great system of Mantras. He has enabled even the serpent to understand the language of music as is evident from the fact that by playing the Indian lute the serpent can be controlled as it is completely overwhelmed and enthralled by its music.

[The music emanating from the lute has no words, but it is sufficient to enchant the serpent. The serpent understands the music and gets so ecstatic that if the lute is played expertly it would raise its hood and sway from side to side in joy. The same music will mean nothing to the man or any other animal. It is believed that it is very easy to control even the most ferocious snake with the help of certain Mantras when they accompany the playing of the lute.

The snake actually does not understand what song is being played on the lute, but the frequencies generated by sound of this instrument are sufficient to massage its nerves to such an extent that the sense of ecstasy and exhilaration is aroused in the reptile.

The idea being conveyed here is that though one may not know the meaning of the Mantras fully, though he may not be an expert in the science of Mantras, or know the intricacies of metaphysics and spiritualism, but still if he repeats some given set of Mantras they are bound to produce their positive effects upon him even though he may be unaware of them, or he may be enjoying these benefits unwittingly.

There is one other significance of citing the case of the Indian lute vis-à-vis the serpent. The serpent is made ecstatic only by the sound or the music of this instrument, and it pays no heed to any other musical instrument. Therefore, if one were to attain Brahm and understand the potentials of his Atma, he must use the correct Mantra and follow the correct path as envisaged by the Upanishads. Wrong Mantra repeated wrongly will produce no effects like the serpent is not aroused by any other musical instrument except the Indian lute.]

This 'wheel' represented by the continuous chanting or singing of the Mantras is represented by the symbolic halo around the Sun that consists of its brilliant rays, and around the Gods that represent their divinity and holiness. [In other words, if the Mantras are incanted properly in the prescribed manner, the person also develops a halo of holiness around himself.] (19).

Atharva Veda's *Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad*, Canto 1, verse nos. 12-13 describe the concept of 'Mantra' elaborately. Let us see how this concept is explained by this Upanishad in the context of the Mantras of Lord Ram—

“Verse no. 12 = Whatever deeds and actions an aspirant or seeker does or undertakes to do to achieve his goal are successful through the medium of a Mantra. The Mantra is a medium by which desired results are easily and comfortably attained; they are aids to one's fulfillment of desires and objectives in life—whether mundane or spiritual¹. A Mantra makes the attainment of the desired goal a certainty.

A Mantra indicates the result or rewards that can be expected by using it just like a certain ingredient in a medicine can indicate in advance what one can expect by the use of that

particular formulation. [This is because each Mantra is like a mathematical formula, and each hymn is like an equation. Even as definitive results follow the use of certain pre-determined formula and equation in scientific quest or mathematical calculations, definitive results are also expected by employing specific Mantras for doing Japa (repetition) or Yoga (meditation) and Dhyān (contemplation) with specific objectives in mind.]

The word Mantra is derived from two words—the first word is ‘Manan’ which means to persistently remember something so as to make the mind firmly rooted in it, to ponder and contemplate upon it, to deeply think about it and meditate on it so that one can arrive at some certain conclusion about the truth of that particular thing, while the second word ‘Traan’ means to give freedom and protection from some kind of torment or miserable condition, to deliver someone from his miseries and predicaments etc. Hence, a Mantra is an instrument by the help of which a person can find spiritual liberation and deliverance from his worldly torments and miseries. This is achieved by concentrating upon the Mantra, by relying upon its mystical powers and spiritual potentials, and using it to do meditation and contemplation. Constant repetition of the Mantra helps to multiply its effect and reinforce its earlier benefits. [Repetition of the Mantra is necessary for its full benefits to accrue and take effect. It’s just like the case of a patient having to repeat a medicine over a long period of time to get rid of some chronic disease. If he stops taking it before the disease is completely routed, then not only would the disease relapse but it would do so with a vengeance. Another example can be cited about a man’s skills and expertise in a professional field—if he discontinues using his knowledge and skills after some time in life, he forgets about them and gets out of tune. All the long years he had spent acquiring the knowledge and the special skill go to a waste if they are not practiced for a lifetime. Similarly, repetition of Mantras and practice of meditation is a life-long process, and a wise man should persevere with them.] (12).

[Note—¹In the present case, this Mantra that is employed for doing Japa is the ‘Ram Mantra’ which is a Tarak Mantra (refer Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 1). This indicates that the aspirant seeks his final spiritual liberation and deliverance rather than hoping to get some worldly gain by employing it. Being a ‘Tarak Mantra’ instead of an ordinary Mantra, this Mantra of Lord Ram is the one that liberates the person from all spiritual delusions and worldly snares, and therefore to use it for some worldly accomplishments or gains would be absolutely absurd and ridiculous.

Again, since the Mantra of Lord Ram pertains to the cosmic Divinity known as the supreme transcendental Brahm which is pure Consciousness and the Absolute Truth of creation, it follows that a person who repeats this Mantra is deemed to be most enlightened and self as well as Brahm realised. He is deemed to have understood the great Truth of the ‘self’ and the Atma. He is rich with the divine virtues of Vairagya and Gyan as described in verse nos. 4-5 of this Canto 1 above.

While the eclectic Ram Mantra is used by a spiritual aspirant for his liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation, other Mantras of various demonination are used by other ordinary people to fulfill their worldly needs and desires, such as the case when one does a fire sacrifice to attain certain objectives in this world and uses various

Mantras to successfully complete it. Such exercises are done with some sort of worldly aim in sight, such as acquiring various mystical powers called the Siddhis, or getting established in this world and attaining name, fame, majesty, strength, powers, material prosperity and wealth in this world, or for obtaining victory on opponents, and many other such desires and wishes for which a man usually uses a Mantra. But it is like bartering away the value of a precious gem in exchange of glass or worthless stone.

Every Mantra has a divine aspect; all of them have their own potentials and powers that are intrinsic to them, but it actually depends upon the user how good he makes of it. The wise one amongst them would obviously employ the stupendous powers and potentials inherent in any Mantra to obtain something of an eternal, abiding and matchless value—and what better use can one put the powers of the Mantra than to use it to find permanent freedom from the fetters that tie his soul to this deluding and tormenting world of a continues cycle of birth and death along with its attendant horrors and miseries.

And to top it all, if such a wise man happens to be privileged enough to come across a Mantra that is the best of them all, and which can be thousands of time more effective by putting in the least of efforts, and which gives direct access to the supreme Authority in creation which has the authority and power to grant the much-desired and much-awaited freedom for the seeker, what more can he want. Such a Mantra is this glorious ‘Ram Mantra’ which is the ‘Tarak Mantra’. It is divine, sublime, priceless and matchless in spiritual value, and provides a direct access to the supreme Brahm. This Mantra can provide ‘Mukti and Moksha’ single handedly; it is one-stop solution for all the spiritual woes of the creature as it bestows upon him liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation at one go. That is why those who accept it as their spiritual formula are deemed to be the wisest and the most enlightened souls in this creation. A man who comes to know about Lord Ram’s ‘Tarak Mantra’ would discard all other Mantras and accept this single Mantra whole-heartedly as a penance for all his spiritual problems.

This single Ram-Mantra is the letter and the spirit, the essence and the life of all the Mantras taken together. It is like the juice of all the Mantras extracted for the spiritual benefit of the spiritual aspirant. It combines at once all their varied meanings, their uses and goals, their holiness and divinity, their supernatural powers and mysticism. It is indeed like the crown jewel of all the Mantras, and it has the power and potential of all the Mantras put together into a single formula.]

“Verse no. 13 = The Mantra of a deity is a complete representation of that deity.

Mantra is a group of mystical letters or syllables or words or phrases that are used as an aid to concentrate and steady the mind and focus one’s energy towards the successful completion of the process of Yoga. It is the sound symbol embodying the form, the power and the consciousness of the supreme Brahm or its various manifestations as the deities worshipped.

But it must be emphasised here that even as any formula— whether in the realm of science or mathematics— is useful only when the student understands its meaning and application, the Mantras too, being spiritual formulas themselves, would be beneficial only when their meaning and import are fully understood. Though, off course, even as

learning by rote can enable a student to mug up Chapters of a book to pass an examination without being able to answer one single question based on reasoning on the same subject that he has parroted, so the Mantras do have their impact when repeated blindly, but the benefit is only superficial. It is better than nothing but is not wholesome; they don't lead to self awakening as such. The Mantras are the vehicle which the aspirant uses to travel from the plane of the world to spiritual plane because Mantras can be repeated even while a person goes on with his daily chores, but his subconscious mind dwells not on the objects of the world but on the objects of the divine. In due course of time, this has a profound psychological impact on the aspirant. Gradually he seems to identify himself more with the divine principles than with the humdrum worldly principles. The seeker/aspirant gradually veers himself away from worldly entanglements and engages himself with spiritual discipline. First it's external and then it becomes internal. Even as a medicine taken over a long period of time eradicates a disease, the constant repetition of the Mantras tend to scrub his subconscious clean of all negative traits and replace them with divine traits.

The science of various Mantras was derived from the profundity about the ethereal and sublime knowledge of the universal and omnipresent cosmic sound. The specific structure or configuration of letters and syllables of a Mantra can be regarded as coded compilation of great spiritual doctrines or a cryptic metaphysical formulae of great import; the rhythmic chanting or repeating of which with due diligence, dedication, mental concentration, consistent and persistent pace and practice generates specific energy currents present in the cosmic ether in the form of the cosmic sound.

First let us understand the sonic power of some of the basic vowel sounds used in the scriptures and which form part of Mantras. The various combinations of these vowel sounds have as many special effects and create as many energy sources as are possible by their various permutations and combinations. Each syllable or letter of a Mantra stands for a particular aspect of this energy field, which the scriptures prefer to call 'God'. The 'Akshamaliko-panishad of Rig Veda' has bestowed and empowered each alphabet with divine and spiritual powers and threaded them together in a string called the 'prayer rosary'.

Some of the basic vowel sounds of Sanskrit/Hindi and their effects are enumerated as follows :- (i) A (अ) —Pronouncing this vowel has a direct effect on the heart. The pumping of the heart and the supply of pure blood in the body is supported by this sound. Repeated loud pronunciation at regulated amplitude helps to regulate pure blood supply to the body and keep the heart tuned. It possesses creative powers.

(ii) Aa (आ) —The sound of this vowel effects the chest and upper parts of the lungs. It strengthens ribs, helps clean the digestive canal and energises the mind because to pronounce it, the mouth has to be opened wide, enabling fresh air laden with oxygen to enter the body and oxidize the tissues.

(iii) E and Ee (इ, ई) —Pronunciation of the short and long sound of the 3rd and 4th vowels have a direct effect on the throat, almost like a gargle. It cleanses the upper chamber of the respiratory tract as well as the alimentary canal. It helps to relieve headaches.

(iv) U or Oo (उ, ऊ) —The short and long vowel sound of ‘Oo’ have direct effect on the organs in the middle and lower part of the body (i.e. abdomen) —e.g. liver, stomach, lower intestine and bowels because abdominal muscles are used to pronounce it. Constipation is relieved by prolonged pronunciation of this vowel sound.

(v) Ae and Aye (ए, ऐ) —These two vowel sounds effect the kidney and the junction of the throat and the respiratory tract. It can relieve renal disease. It softens vocal cords, hence it is useful for those who use the voice much —e.g. teachers, singers, orators etc.

(vi) O and Ao (ओ, औ) —This vowel sound effects the genitals and the central part of the chest.

(vii) Ang (अं) —This is pronounced by opening and closing the throat. The oxygen inhaled when the mouth is open and fresh air is trapped inside the body helps in oxidizing the RBC (red blood corpuscles) which, in turn, oxidizes the tissue.

(viii) Aha (अः) —The pronunciation of this vowel sound titillates the tongue and the upper part of the palate. It regulates secretions of hormones which in turn regulate the various functions of the body.

Vocal sound and five elements:- Prof. Dobson has hypothesized that the primary speech of the human race must have originated using these vowel sounds. The ‘wind’ is a medium for propagation of sound. Air controls the type or genre, quality, amplitude and tune of sound— as is evident from a whistle, a flute or a mouth organ. The ‘water’ is also a medium of propagating sound as is done by marine creatures and some musical instruments using water such as the ‘Jal Tarang’. The relation of sound with ‘fire’ consisting of light and heat as its elementary constituents is evident in the functioning of the tono-meter, spectro-meter and thermo-meter. Its subtle effect on the mind is an example of ‘heated exchange of words’ during an argument. The ‘space’ element and its relationship with sound are evidenced by music and the cosmic ‘Naad’.

Benjamin Lee Whorf, an American scholar and chemical engineer, researched the psychological aspects of language and published his findings. ‘The idea, entirely unfamiliar to the modern world, that nature and language are inwardly akin, was for ages well known to various high cultures. In India, one aspect of it has been the idea of the Mantra and formed an art form called the ‘Art of Mantra Chanting’. On the simplest cultural level, a Mantra is merely an incantation of primitive magic, such as the crudest cultures have. In high culture it may have a different, intellectual meaning, dealing with the inner affinity of language and the cosmic order. At a still higher level, it becomes Mantra Yoga. Therein the Mantra becomes a manifold of conscious patterns, contrived to assist the consciousness into the nominal pattern world, whereupon it is ‘in the driver’s seat’. It can set the human organism to transmit, control and amplify thousand-fold forces which that organism normally transmits only at unobservable low intensities.’

The space or sky is the habitat of the cosmos; even our earth is nothing more than a speck or a grain of sand in this vast cosmos. Since the cosmos is filled with ether, which is completely infused with ‘Naad’, we are completely drenched by it, completely submerged

in it. The ether is a gigantic ocean of sound waves. Sound is also the first source of energy; its combination with light lies at the root of generation of different types of energy currents and particles of matter.

In a more practical term, our body represents that vast cosmos. The space inside the skin made of earth is filled with water, air and fire. When we speak, our vocal cords create the cosmic 'Naad' in its microcosmic form, and we call it speech.

The scriptures affirm that OM, the sublime sound, is the source of all creation which has its base in it. The word OM is said to be the base/foundation and the basis/origin of all Mantras because Mantras consist of letters and syllables, and these are various forms that sound takes. Since sound has its origin in the 'Naad', hence OM is the 'seed or root' of all the Mantras. All syllables, letters, Mantras and words have emanated from the vibrations of the primordial sound called the 'Naad'.

Components of Mantras:- The Mantras consists of (i) Vowels which are continuous sounds and (ii) Consonants which are interruptions of those sounds. The consonants cannot be pronounced without the vowels. As we know, sound travels in waves, and when similar waves of the same frequency overlap each other, they gain tremendous strength and are magnified. The super imposition of compatible waves or vibration have profound effect, and that is why chanting of the Mantras in chorus as done in Kirtan or recitation of Mantras during ancient fire sacrifices creates specific sound vibrations which can dispel negative energy and have great impact on the environment.

There are *two theories* regarding the various components of a Mantra--one says that the Mantra has **five components** while the other ascribe **six components** to all Mantras. Now let us see both of them.

The five components of Mantra are the following:- (i) Rishi, (ii) Chanda, (iii) Devta (God), (iv) Bija/Beej (root, seed) and (v) Tatva (essence, gist).

(i) The *Rishi* of a Mantra is the sage or 'seer' who had first visualised a particular Mantra as a divine formula having stupendous spiritual and mystical powers and potentials. He was the one who was the first person who had envisioned a particular metaphysical concept during one of his meditative trances.

The 'Rishi' of any given Mantra is the one who conceived the Mantra, understood its meaning, applied it in practice and verified its powers and potentials, and then expounded upon it and propagated it by means of preaching it to his or her disciple.

He or she had first visualised or conceived this Mantra, he is the one who had first discovered this mystical formula, then determined and verified its astounding mystical and divine authority, majestic potentials, glorious spiritual powers, and proved its efficacy not only in the sphere of metaphysics and spiritualism but also in more materialistic terms as having certain mysterious powers, which when properly harnessed, could give worldly rewards or benefits to the user of these mystical Mantras. He had tested the effectiveness and potential powers of the esoteric Mantra, and then given it the status of a holy and divine mystical formula which can enable the worshipper to attain desired results. Such divine and eclectic revelations

were made known to the rest of the world in the form of hymns composed in various poetical composition styles called Chandas.

Hence, the Rishi of a Mantra is the one who had first conceptualised it, who had first discovered it, who had first composed its hymns and witnessed its powerful might first hand. He tested the mystical powers of this hymn and then taught about it to his disciples for their welfare. Therefore, the Rishi is the first exponent of a particular Mantra as well as its first teacher and preacher. He is honoured for this by first remembering him when worshipping a chosen deity through a particular Mantra in order to pay homage to his memory and seek his blessings. He was like a modern day scientist who does long research and arrives at some astounding discovery and tests its truthfulness and effectiveness in practical terms. Then that discovery is named after him.

For example, in Dakshin Murti Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, Brahma the old patriarch of visible creation is said to be the 'Rishi' of the Mantras dedicated to Lord Dakshin Mukhi (i.e. Lord Shiva as a personification of Brahm). Verse no. 32 of this Upanishad clearly asserts that it was Brahma who had first worshipped the supreme transcendental Brahm at the beginning of creation with these hymns called Mantras in order to start the process of creation. Hence, he is the Rishi of these Mantras. "Verse no. 32 = At the beginning of creation, the grandfather of creation Prajapati Brahma had worshipped this Supreme Being (by using the hymns called Mantras as enumerated in this Upanishad) to empower himself to initiate the process of creation. It was due to this worship that he got sufficient energy and strength to go about the arduous task of creation and fulfill his ambition of creating this world. This made him fulfilled and happy because he was successful in his desires. That is why Prajapati Brahma is deemed to be his original worshipper (32)."

The Mantra was prescribed as a divine mystical formula that could be used for doing Japa (repetition of some spiritual formula that can give the seeker the benefits that he seeks), as a mystical formula to be used during formal religious fire sacrificial rituals, as a means to concentrate the mind and intellect on the divinity during meditation and contemplation, and as esoteric and magical charm to be used as cryptic symbols of certain occult forms of worship where charm instruments, called the Yantra, are used to invoke divine blessings and intercession.

Thus, they rendered the otherwise mere neutral letter or group of letters into something divine and sublime, and infused it with supernatural powers, bestowing them with their renowned importance, significance and value. Therefore, the name of this particular sage or seer was invoked along with the invocation of the Mantra to honour his contribution as is the practice even in modern times when chemicals and formulae and various other scientific discoveries such as stars, comets, galaxies, distant black holes etc., or new concepts in physics, chemistry, mathematics, astronomy and other sciences are named after the scientist who first discovered them.

The difference between a Rishi and a Muni is that the latter did not divulge their realisation but preferred to keep their spiritual discoveries to themselves as the word 'Muni' is derived

from the root Mana means the subtle mind and heart. On the other hand, the 'Rishis' used to preach and teach others about their astounding spiritual realisation and discoveries.

(ii) The *Chanda* is the classical style of poetic composition in which the Mantra is composed. For example, the most popular style is called 'Gayatri' in which there are three lines of eight letters or syllables, totaling twenty four letters or syllables in all. The 'Chanda' indicates the rhythmic style of composition adopted for the pronunciation or chanting of the Mantra. This component creates the physical sound or the sonic energy which empowers the Mantra with substantial physical potent and substantial mystical effects.

(iii) The third component called the *Devata* or the chosen deity is the specific God-head that is aimed to be worshipped and realised with that Mantra. It is the deity to whom this particular Mantra is dedicated. Usually it is the supreme transcendental Brahm to whom the Mantra is devoted. But in case specific God or Goddess is being worshipped using a Mantra, then it would be obviously that particular God or Goddess who would be the Devta. For instance, Goddess Saraswati is the patron goddess being worshipped by using Mantras specifically dedicated to her as said in Saraswati Rahasya Upanidhad, verse no. 5 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition. When the specific God is invoked by the use of a particular Mantra specially dedicated to him, it is like invoking all the divine energies and cosmic powers represented by that particular God-head. In other words, it is the bull's eye at which the energised arrow is being targeted. The God, in this context, can be defined as the specific cosmic field at which the frequency generated by the chanting (Japa) of a particular Mantra is directed even as specific broadcasting radio station use specific frequencies targeted to a particular area of the globe or a satellite in space. It is a very scientific concept. That is why if we wish to worship any particular God or divine aspect of creation, we have to use Mantras dedicated to this specific God or deity.

(iv) The *Beej*, literally the seed, is the syllable or letter which is the basic sound-form, the primary sound from which the Mantra has sprouted much like a tall tree having its origin in the humble 'seed'. The 'Beej' or seed of the Mantra indicates the root or origin of the Mantra. It is a group of those syllables that contain, in compact coded form, the essence or gist of the Mantra, and thereby it implies the existence of latent energy or power in that Mantra. During formal ritualistic forms of worship using worship instruments as well as during the process of 'Anga Nyas', which is the invocation of the chosen deity and assigning various designated parts of the body where this deity is to invest its supernatural powers for the benefit of the worshipper. The Beej Mantra is the root or seed formula around which a particular Mantra is built, and which gives the Mantra its basic and inherent power and mystical strength.

(v) The fifth component called the *Tatva*—essence indicates the inherent potential supernatural powers and astounding prowess of the Mantra, the purpose for which it should be used, and is like the meaning of a formula without which it can't be wisely used.

According to another interpretation, the **Mantra has six components**. They are Rishi, Chanda, Devta, Beej, Shakti and Kilak. While the first four components have already been described earlier, the last two, i.e. Shakti and Kilak are briefly described now:--

(a) The fifth component is the *Shakti* of the Mantra. It is the mystical, astounding, divine and holy cosmic dynamic powers that the particular Mantra possesses; the latent and powerful energy of the Mantra which makes it so effective and praiseworthy. The Shakti is the concealed latent but most magnificent and dynamic potentials of the Mantra which are reflective of the patron deity's supernatural authority and powers. The Shakti is the mystical dynamic cosmic powers of Nature that are encrypted in the Mantra's syllables and letters. In other words, the mysterious power, authority and dynamism of the Mantra is called its 'Shakti'. Or, the Mantra is the worshipped deity manifested in the words or letters of the Mantra, complete with all its supernatural powers and authority. The word Shakti itself means 'energy', so the Shakti of the Mantra is the Mantra's dynamic energy that is subtly present in it in a coded form. Proper use of the Mantra helps to de-code this energy and unleash or activate it.

(b) The *Kilak* is the sixth component. It is like the peg that helps a Mantra to be established in the body of the worshipper of a particular deity of that Mantra, or to the mystical worship instrument used during occult practices to invoke the supernatural powers of the deity thorough this Mantra and invest this instrument with these divine and mystical supernatural powers. It is like a nail to fix the Mantra at the designated point in the body. The Kilak helps to anchor or provide a mooring that helps to fix the mystical effects of a Mantra and prevent it being dissipated or wasted. Usually, it is in the form of Beej Mantras, or the seed or root letters having mystical powers that are specific to the deity being worshipped by the given Mantra.

For example, the Saraswati Rahasya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 4 says that the Kilak of the Saraswati's Mantra is the Pran, which means that this Mantra is hitched to the vital forces of life represented by Pran, the vital winds, and especially breath. The Mantra in effect empowers the Pran to become active and empowered, to possess and display all the glorious and stupendous powers and majesty of the worshipped deity through its various actions and deeds. For instance, when a man speaks wisely, truthfully and energetically, it is actually the Pran revealing these glorious virtues of Goddess Saraswati.

Another example is the Shuk Rahasya Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda, which describes the use of OM as a Mantra to do Anga Nyas in its verse no. 20. The Kilak for OM is 'So-a-ham' meaning 'that is me', where 'that' refers to the supreme Brahm. In this case, the spiritual aspirant's Atma is the 'me' or his true 'self'. Having a firm conviction and faith in this eclectic truth is like the nail which helps to fix his attention on the glory of the Mantra OM along with the awareness of his 'self' as being a manifestation of Brahm for whom this Mantra OM is being used.

Beej or seed or root Mantra and Maatrika of a Mantra—The concept of Beej Mantra and the Maatrika of a Mantra are closely related with each other and are the two aspects of the same coin. Whereas the term 'Beej Mantra' is used to indicate the root or seed from where the Mantra evolves and derives its mystical powers, the term Maatrika is generally used in the Tantra form of worship to indicate the divine Shaktis or Mother Goddesses that personify the Supreme Being who is being worshipped by the Mantra.

Each Mantra has two components—subtle and gross. The subtle part is its ‘Beej Mantra’ which is like the seed from where the huge tree grows. The gross part is the larger and extended part of the Mantra having a number of letters or words or phrases. The Beej Mantra consists of a consonant and the vowel sound attached to it with a dot on top to indicate its point-source of cosmic energy as well as to indicate its anointment as the chief component of the Mantra. The dot is called the Anuswar, and it produces the nasal sound in association with the vowel sign preceding it. For example, in the Mantra ‘Hans’ as described in the Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 62-63, the Beej Mantra is the Sanskrit consonant ‘Ha’ + the vowel sound of the letter ‘A’ with a dot on top—producing the sound equivalent of ‘hunt + suns or sons’ = ‘hans’. Since this word ‘Hans’ refers to the cosmic transcendental supreme Brahm and its counterpart as the Atma or pure consciousness present in the body of an individual creature, the letter ‘Ha’ represents Brahm, while the letter ‘Sa’, which is a sibilant sound following the main Beej Mantra, means ‘like that’ or ‘like it’ referring to the Atma because the Atma is ‘like that Brahm’.

The Beej Mantra is like the ‘seed or root’ from which the rest of the Mantra evolves and is said to derive its mystical and stupendous powers and potentials. This Beej Mantra is like the seed having the tree secretly present in it, and the Mantra would then be like the fully grown-up tree. Even when grown, the tree needs the root to anchor it and derive its nourishment from the ground. Hence the two epithets ‘seed’ and ‘root’ used to describe the Beej Mantra. Each deity has a specific Beej Mantra dedicated to it, and one Beej Mantra may apply to more than one deity.

The Beej Mantra is like someone’s pet name or nick-name by which he is fondly known to and called by those who are very close to him as compared to his formal name and address with which he is known to and addressed by the rest of the world in his formal life. Hence, the use of the Beej Mantra establishes a close proximity between the worshipper and the deity worshipped, and it creates an environment of informality and direct access as compared to formal names.

The Maatrika of a Mantra are the various Sanskrit letters or alphabets that collectively form the text of the Mantra.

Since the Mantra represents the cosmic divinity known as the supreme transcendental Brahm in its numerous manifestations known as various Gods, the letters are called the Maatrikas because they empower this Mantra with the stupendous mystical powers that this Mantra possesses much like Brahm employing his cosmic dynamic energy to enable him to initiate and then sustain and develop this creation, and even bring about its conclusion.

The Maatrika Vidya is the esoteric and secret knowledge of creation that deals with the Shakti or the dynamic powers of the Supreme Being known as Brahm that first stirs the neutral and calm primordial cosmic gel by injecting in it the first spark of life, which in turn sets off a chain reaction that culminates in the form of the creation as it is known now. The word ‘Maatrika’ literally means a small mother. Since the process of creation is so complex that it required a number of complicated processes taking place simultaneously, with each individual element

and each single dynamic source of energy playing its crucial role in the composite phenomenon of creation, these were called 'Maatrikas' because they were all like little mothers who had got together and used their combined energy, resources and abilities to create or conceive a cosmic embryo, nourish it, and allow it to develop to maturity so that the creation could be revealed in the way it finally did. They conceived and harboured this creation in their collective womb, and had nourished and sustained it till the time it was born in the matured form as we know it today.

The 'Maatrika Vidya' is the esoteric knowledge (science) which pertains to the individual letters or syllables of any given Mantra dedicated to any given deity who represents one or the other aspect or facet of the Supreme Being known as Brahm. The Maatrika Vidya deals with the mystical power, energy, authority and strength, i.e. the dynamism that is inherent in any given Mantra, but which is based on the individual units (i.e. the individual letters or syllables) of the Mantra. That is, if one knows what the individual units of a Mantra are, then he can correctly predict the power and abilities that not only this Mantra possesses but also of the deity that this Mantra represents.

For instance, it is well established that the Mantra 'OM' stands for Brahm. Therefore, the Maatrika Vidya of OM would be a comprehensive understanding of its finer sound components and their alphabetical counterparts, along with their spiritual significance and metaphysical import, as well as the combined astounding spiritual powers, dynamism and energy that they incorporate in themselves when they form the Mantra known as 'OM'.

In modern science we know that any finished product requires a chain of steps to be meticulously undertaken before it is finally produced. The science of organic chemistry teaches us that numerous chemical products are created by tweaking the basic molecular structure of various elements in association with the ubiquitous carbon atom that is at the central core of all organic formulas.

Similarly, the creation of this universe was not an isolated event, but it required countless subtler steps undertaken in a systematic form that worked together towards one goal, and that goal was the revelation of this creation. Many small steps and countless numbers of subtle factors that were insignificant in themselves, but assumed great importance as part of the cosmic mosaic of creation, contributed to the creation of this world. Each of these factors and elements are the Maatrikas of this creation. This world is a 'creation' precisely for this reason—it was moulded from primary ingredients that had no significant value of their own, but when they were subjected to many adjustments and experimentations they produced a 'world' that is rich in dynamism and energy, a world that has no resemblance to any of these primary ingredients. Each step was equally important and equally significant, because one miss-step would have caused the entire process to malfunction and come to a standstill.

Each of these 'steps' are metaphorically cited as the various 'Maatrikas' in the field of metaphysical interpretation of this celestial phenomenon. Here, the word Maatrika is related to the Mantras which are divine formulas used in meditation and contemplation, and hence implies the hidden energy and dynamism of the letters of the Mantra which give it its inherent stupendous powers, potentials and authority as well as its holiness, divinity and sanctity.

The process of creation involved cosmic efforts by the creator who is said to have performed a cosmic fire sacrifice in order to initiate this process, and had obviously employed certain Mantras, as any fire sacrifice needs the use of Mantras for its proper sanctified process. As would be seen in due course, the Mantra employed by Brahma was Hans that is a synonym Mantra for Pranav or OM. The inherent dynamism and energy of this Mantra is contained in its syllables or letters, and it is this dynamism and energy that not only initiated the process of creation but also sustained it during its period of development and growth that culminated in the birth of the visible creation.

Brahm initiated this creation with the help of his cosmic dynamic powers and energy represented and encrypted in the Beej Mantra. But as it happened, the unfolded creation had numerous Gods and Goddesses. These Gods actually symbolise the various aspects of Brahm's cosmic powers and authority, and the Goddesses represent their empowerment and strength to give effect to their mandate. This is a classic case of delegation of authority.

Mere letters and words or phrases of the Mantra would be neutral if not given their powers, or if they are not 'empowered' and 'enabled' much like Brahm which was a neutral entity until it empowered and armed itself with the cosmic dynamic energy, the necessary strength and authority to enable itself to initiate the process of creation. So, the Maatrika or Beej Mantras are the empowering aspect of the main body of the Mantra.

In Hinduism, meditation and contemplation upon a chosen deity is done by the help of a Mantra as a specific formula dedicated to invoke its powers as well as to concentrate the mind and its various faculties on the deity along with aiding the process of meditation and contemplation. This is done by doing Japa which involves repetition of the given Mantra. In fact, Japa is an integral part of any religious exercise, even for success in Yoga because it helps to harness the latent and dormant energy in the body by focusing the mind on the purpose at hand. The Beej Mantra is used for its concentrated energy and strength alongside its ease of use and usefulness in offering oblations or doing Anga Nyas (which is establishing the divine powers of the deity on the different parts of the body to purify them, empower them and strengthen them with dynamic energy and holiness associated with the Mantra).

In metaphysics, the supreme Brahm is the deity worshipped, and his Manta is OM which is a monosyllabic word. The Brahm Vidya Upanishad however describes the Mantra as 'Hans' because it refers to the pure consciousness called the Atma as a manifestation of Brahm in the body of the individual creature, and repetition of this Mantra is like establishing a union between the two of them and reminding the spiritual aspirant that his 'true self' is the Atma which is none other than the Supreme Being known as Brahm. That is why there are a number of Yoga Upanishads that extol the virtues of this Hans Mantra during the process of various meditation and contemplation exercises.

The single point source of everything in existence is indisputably Brahm represented by the Beej Mantra. If the letter of the Beej Mantra represents this Brahm, then the dot and the vowel sign of the Beej Mantra are like the dynamic powers, energy and authority of Brahm. The extended part of the Mantra would then be equivalent to the revelation of Brahm in the

form of myriad Gods representing one or the other virtues and qualities of Brahm, and their divine counterparts called the various Goddesses would represent the powers and authority vested in these Gods by the supreme Authority so that they can carry out their assigned duties.

In Tantra form of occult worship, the Supreme Being is worshipped as a divine cosmic Shakti or cosmic Mother which is actually the cosmic powers and dynamic energy of the supreme Brahm that is responsible for the creation coming into being, its development, growth and sustenance, and is even responsible for its conclusion. If the Supreme Being is regarded as the cosmic Male, then the opposite force, the cosmic Female, is envisioned as the Shakti, or the dynamic energy and vital powers, potentials and authority of this Supreme Being. The cosmic Male provided the vital spark of life in the form of the cosmic Consciousness which is like the 'sperm', while the cosmic Shakti is the female counter-part, called the 'Prakriti' which received this 'sperm' and nourished it in its womb to produce the offspring in the form of this vast creation. It was in the Prakriti's womb that the creation was conceived, developed and grew to emerge as the mysterious creation which is as mystical and enigmatic as its father, the Supreme Being. Obviously, the cosmic sperm would have been wasted if it was not accepted by the comic Mother known as Prakriti.

In Tantra philosophy, the Supreme Being is known as Mahadeva or Shiva, and the female part or Shakti is known as Uma or Parvati. In the language of the Upanishads or Vedanta, the same Supreme Being is known as the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic gross body of the supreme transcendental Brahm from which the entire creation sprouted like the tree from a seed, and the cosmic Shakti is called Maya or Prakriti. The Maya is nothing but the Viraat Purush's dynamic powers that brought about the beginning of creation, sustains it and would finally conclude it; the Prakriti is the womb where the creation conceived and developed. The embryo is the Hiranyagarbha which is the subtle body of Brahm, and this embryo developed and revealed the Viraat Purush.

So, if the given Mantra is regarded as a personification of the given deity, then the Maatrika would be its energy and dynamism that is latent and inherent in it. The Mantra would lose its powers and potentials in the absence of the Maatrika just like the Supreme Being needed the power of the Shakti to create the world.

The word Maatrika literally means a 'little mother'. So, it is given the same reverence that one would give to a mother because it is the mother that gives shape to the body of the offspring—in this case the main body of the Mantra. Shorn of the Maatrika, the Mantra would be meaningless and powerless.

In Tantra form of worship, the term 'Maatrika' is used to indicate the following seven Goddesses—Brahmi, Maheshwari, Kaumari, Vaishnavi, Vaaraahi, Indraani, and Chamunda.

The *Brahm Vidya Upanishad* of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, verse no. 63 asserts that *no Mantra has any value if there is no Maatrika in it*. To quote—"Nowhere is any Mantra (which is an esoteric and mystical group of letters or words or phrases used to

worship or pay tributes to a deity) preached or nowhere does it have any meaning, value or even an existence if there is no Maatrika in it (63).”

This Upanishad has elaborately described the *Hans Mantra* in its various verses, e.g. verse nos. 16, 20-28, 34, 60-64, 78-79. In the present case, the Mantra is ‘Hans’ referring to Brahm in the form of the Atma or pure consciousness present inside the body of the spiritual aspirant.

Atharva Veda’s *Pashupat Brahm Upanishad*, Kanda/Canto 1, verse nos. 3-4 says that Maatrika Vidya is the esoteric knowledge that had been instrumental in the creation of this world.

To quote—

“verse no. 3 = The Swayambhu (self-born) Brahma (the creator) replied—‘The Maatrika Vidya is the one that has created the entire world. [It is the knowledge that deals with the intricacies and finer subtle details of the process of creation, details that are esoteric and mysterious. It would answer your question ‘How was this creation created?’]’ (3).

“verse no. 4 = This Vidya known as Maatrika Vidya has two forms—one with two syllables or letters (i.e. the Mantra ‘Hans’), and the other with three syllables or letters (i.e. the Mantra ‘OM’ or Pranav). In fact, both these two forms of the Maatrika Vidya are the same. It also has another eclectic but esoteric form or derivation or variation having four letters or syllables (4).”

Some important Beej Mantras and the texts dealing with them—

The Beej Mantras are also called the seed or root Mantras. The word ‘Beej’ refers to the fundamental, essential, elementary part of the Mantra. They are monosyllables which encrypt all the divine, spiritual, mystical and eclectic powers, potentials and authority possessed by the patron deity for which that particular Beej Mantra is meant. These Beej Mantras are used in formal ritualistic worship, as during fire sacrifices, in occult forms of worship when worship instruments consisting of geometrical lines and figures, called the Yantra, are employed much like we have the circuit diagrams in an electronic instrument, as well as for doing Japa or constant repetition of a particular letter or word or phrase having divine and mystical qualities in order to invoke their powers and potentials for the benefit of the aspirant, and meditation and contemplation. These Beej Mantras are added as a prefix or suffix to the main Mantra to enhance and multiply its effects and potentials. For example, the root/seed/Beej Mantra ‘Rang’ stands for Lord Ram as well as the fire element. In other words, when it is used during a formal form of worship, it would boost the effect of the main Mantra of Lord Ram as well as subtly inject it with the stupendous and magnificent powers of ‘fire’.

They are monosyllables and are much like the alphabets used in science and mathematical equations to denote other elements or factors. They encrypt great secret powers of creation in them, and must be pronounced and used properly even as the different alphabets standing for different atoms in organic chemistry must be properly placed at their designated places to make any sense out of them; otherwise the entire complex chemical compound represented by these monosyllable alphabets would be meaningless. Even in algebra, we use

alphabets to denote certain things, and then go on calculating on the basis of these hypothetical assumptions to arrive at conclusive results. This system is used in all spheres of science. Therefore we conclude that the use of these 'Beej' Mantras during occult practices and ritualistic forms of worship to invoke divine powers and seek results is like the time tested scientific method applied in the sphere of metaphysics.

The Beejnighantu text (Beej = seed Mantra; Nighantu = dictionary) written by Bhairav lists 50 such Beej Mantras and describes what they stand for. Another text known as Beej-vidhaan has 75 lines in the poetical style called the Anushtup Chanda describing the Beej Mantras like Hrim, Strim, Aim, Krim etc. representing different deities such as Aindri, Vaamekshana, Saraswati, Kali etc. respectively.

Similarly, the Ekakchar-kosha of Purshottamadeva lists the Beej Mantras of various Gods and Goddesses, such as 'A' for Vasudeo, 'Aa' for Pitaamaha (Brahma the creator of the visible world), 'Pa' for the Wind God called Pawan, 'Saa' for Laxmi the goddess of wealth as well as for Shiva the third God of the Trinity.

Another text called Mantraarthaa-bhidhan by Varadaatantra also lists the Beej Mantra such as 'Haum' for Shiva, 'Dum' for Goddess Durga, 'Krim' for Goddess Kalikaa, 'Hrim' for Goddess Bhuvaneshwari, 'Klim' for Kaamdeo-cupid, the patron god of love and passion, 'Gam' for Ganesh, 'Kshraum' for Narshingh, the half-lion and half-man incarnation of Vishnu, etc.

According to Maatrikaanighantu by Mahidas, the Beej Mantras and even the word Mantras of certain chief deities are as follows—'A' stands for Shrikantha (Shiva, the one with a blue-tinged throat), 'Keshava' for Krishna, 'Vaata' for the Wind God of Pawan, 'Ka' for Maya, 'Ma' stands both for Vaikuntha, the abode for Lord Vishnu who is the second of the Trinity Gods and is responsible for sustenance of creation, as well as for Mahaakaal, one of the names of Shiva, 'Ya' stands for Yamuna etc.

There are said to be eight Maatrikas or Beej Mantras pertaining to Goddess Tripura. These are the esoteric letters that symbolize the eight forms of Goddesses that the universal cosmic Mother has taken. They are the following—'Hrim' for Aindri and Bhuvaneshwari, 'Strim' for Vaamekshana, 'Aim' for Saraswati, 'Krim' for Kali, 'Saa' for Laxmi, 'Dum' for Goddess Durga, 'Krim' for Goddess Kalikaa, and 'Klim' for Kaam. These eight Maatrikas of Goddess Tripura are enshrined in the outer first Chakra (ring) of the worship instrument employed to offer mystical worship to Goddess Tripura as described in *Tripura Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 2, paragraph no. 12.

The *Tripura Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 3, paragraph no. 13 lists some of the Beej Mantras as follows—"The Beej for the Ankush (goad) is 'Kro' (as in crow). The Beej for Khechari (a type of Mudra) are 'Ha' (as in hunt), 'Sa' (as in son), 'Kha' (as in blockhead), and 'Prem/Pren(g)'. The Beej of the Sun is 'Ha'. The Beej for Kaam (passions, lust and desires) is 'Strom'. The Beej for 'Vaghava' (speech) is 'Ka' (as in kerb); this is the ninth Beej. The Beej for 'Kaam-koot' is 'Ha'; it is the tenth Beej.

He who knows this is said to be an expert in the Mantras. [13]."

The *Ganapati Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, verse no. 7 says that the Beej Mantra for Lord Ganapati or Ganesh is ‘Gam’ (as in gum) or ‘Gan(g)’ (as in gung-ho). The full Mantra of Lord Ganapati using this Beej Mantra is given in verse no. 9, and it is—‘OM Gam’ or ‘OM Gan(g)’. [The full Mantra is ‘OM Gam Ganapataye Namaha’. It briefly means—OM Salutations! I bow most reverentially to Lord Ganapati’.] (9).

The *Dakshin Murti Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its various verses as cited here mention the various *Beej Mantras of the various deities* who are nothing but magnificent personifications of the different eclectic virtues and divine glories of Lord Shiva. (i) The monsyllabic word ‘Praa’ for the wind element (verse no. 7); (ii) The seed or root letter ‘Hrim/Hring’ for Maya (delusion creating powers of Brahm; Mother Nature) and the letter ‘Aim/Aiyang’ for the Vaak Shakti of the faculty of speech (represented by Goddess Saraswati) (verse nos. 11-12); and (iii) The letter ‘Srim/Sring’ which stands for worldly prosperity and wealth, majesty and magnificence represented by the Goddess Laxmi.

The *Yogtattva Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition lists the *Beej Mantras for the five elements* as follows—(i) The Sanskrit letter ‘La’ (as in love) for the earth element and its patron deity Brahma the creator (verse no. 85); (ii) The Sanskrit word ‘Vam’ (as in vulgar + sum) for the water element and its patron deity Moon (verse no. 88); (iii) The Sanskrit letter ‘Ra’ (as in run) for the fire element and its patron deity Rudra, the angry form of Shiva (verse nos. 92-93); (iv) The Sanskrit letter ‘Ya’ (as in yearn) for the air or wind element and its patron deity Ishwar or Vishwatomukhum (verse no. 96); and (v) The Sanskrit letter ‘Ha’ (as in hut) for the sky element and its patron deity Sadaa Shiva, the eternal form of Shiva (verse nos. 98-99).

The *Beej/seed/root Mantra pertaining to Lord Ram* according to *Ram Rahasya Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, Canto 2, verse no. 1-2, is ‘Raam(g)/Raam’. When other important Beej Mantras are prefixed to it, it acquired the following forms according to verse no. 8—OM Ram; Hrin(g)/Hrim Ram; Srin(g)/Srim Ram; Klin(g)/Klim Ram; Aiyang(g)/Aim Ram; and Raan(g)/Raam Ram. All these Mantras have the same divine potentials and mystical powers but the use depends upon the system of worship adopted by the aspirant. These six phrases are called the ‘Beej’ Mantras that relate to Lord Ram and define the Lord’s multifarious glories, dynamic potentials and majestic powers.

Therefore, the above Mantra of Lord Ram signify the Lord’s following grand virtues—(i) The Beej Mantra ‘OM Ram’ implies that Lord Ram is honoured as a personification of the supreme Brahm whose Beej Mantra is OM. (ii) The Beej Mantra ‘Hrin(g)/Hrim Ram’ implies that Lord Ram personifies the cosmic power of Maya Shakti, the power to create delusions, because this Beej Mantra ‘Hrin(g)/Hrim’ is the one that relates to Maya. (iii) The Beej Mantra ‘Srin(g)/Srim Ram’ indicates that Lord Ram is a personified form of all the grand virtues incorporated in the word ‘Sri’—i.e. he is the Lord of wealth, fame, majesty, grandeur, magnificence, power and authority. This is because this Beej Mantra ‘Srin(g)/Srim’ relates to these virtues of Brahm. (iv) The Beej Mantra ‘Klin(g)/Krim Ram’ indicates that Lord Ram is a personified form of the cosmic power of ‘Kaam’ (passions, desires and aspirations, of hopes

and expectations etc.) that is the driving force which makes the creature do deeds and take actions in this world; it is 'Kaam' which is at the root of all actions and deeds undertaken in this world. This is because 'Klin(g)/Krim' is the Beej Mantra for Kaam and its patron deity known as Kaam-deo. (v) The Mantra 'Aiyan(g)/Aim Ram' refers to the fact that Lord Ram is the Lord who controls the faculty of speech, is the Lord of all forms of knowledge, erudition, learning, enlightenment and wisdom which manifest themselves in a man's words as well as the power of speech to disseminate information for the benefit of creation. This is because the Beej Mantra 'Aiyan(g)/Aim' is the one that relates to Vaak Shakti—the power of speech and the spoken word, as well as Goddess Saraswati who is the patron deity of this grand faculty in creation. When extended to include all forms of knowledge, this Mantra also implies that Lord Ram is a personified form of the Vedas—one apparent reason being that primarily the Vedas were taught and transmitted by the oral method, necessitating the need for speech. And of course (vi) the Mantra 'Raam(g)/Raam Ram' clearly means that the Lord is one like his own self; Lord Ram is unique and matchless; he is the Advaitya Brahm personified as Ram. Since the letter 'Ra' is the Beej Mantra for the Fire, it also means that Lord Ram is as glorious, as pure and purifying, as radiant and splendourous, as self-illuminated and self-glowing, as powerful, strong, unrelenting, energetic, potent and dynamic as the fire element.

The Beej Mantra for Varaaha God (the boar incarnation of Lord Vishnu) is Hoon(g)/Hoom. [Refer—Ram Rahasya Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 3, paragraph no. A.]

The Beej Mantra for Nrisingh God (the half man and half lion incarnation of Lord Vishnu) is Kshroun(g)/Kahraum. [Refer—Ram Rahasya Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 3, paragraph no. F.]

The Beej Mantra for 'Krodh' (anger and symbolising Lord Rudra, one of the manifestations of Lord Shiva) is Kum/Kun(g). [Refer—Ram Rahasya Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 3, paragraph no. H.]

The Beej Mantra (seed/root monosyllable Mantra) OM stands for the attributeless and infinite transcendental supreme entity known as Brahm from which everything that has an existence has had its origin. According to Canto 5, verse no. 16-17 of Ram Rahasya Upanishad of Atharva Veda tradition, OM is another name of Lord Ram because the Lord is a personification of Brahm.

The seed/root monosyllable Mantra Hrin(g)/Hrim stands for the 'Maya Shakti' element of creation. This represents the cosmic energy and divine powers of creation that create delusions. It is therefore used to enable the worshipper to overcome the delusions and its attendant problems that cause numerous hurdles in the spiritual seeker's efforts to find liberation and deliverance as well as the ultimate Truth of creation which would give him peace of mind and soul. [Refer—Ram Rahasya Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 3, paragraph no. D.]

The Beej Mantra (seed/root monosyllable Mantra) Srin(g)/Srim stands for the divine qualities which are like valuable assets for the aspirant. The word 'Sri' means all types of fortunes, wealth, prosperity, property, fame, splendour, magnificence, glory, well beings etc. Hence, this Beej is for Goddess Laxmi or Ramaa, the divine consort of Lord Vishnu, as well as

for Sita, the consort of Lord Ram, as she is an incarnation of Laxmi. [Refer—Ram Rahasya Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 3, paragraph no. A.]

The seed/root monosyllable Mantra Klin(g)/Klim stands for ‘Kaamdeo’ who is a manifestation of the cosmic force of Nature that creates natural desires, passions and yearnings. Hence, this Beej Mantra is regarded as the one for ‘Kaam’ or the natural tendency of a creature to have various desires, passions, yearnings, wishes, hopes and expectations. [Refer—Ram Rahasya Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 3, paragraph no. A.]

The Beej Mantra (seed/root monosyllable Mantra) Aiyan(g)/Aim stands for the ‘Vaak Shakti’ or the power of speech and its patron Goddess Saraswati, the goddess of learning and wisdom. This is because the faculty of speech and acquisition and dispensing of knowledge and skills are intertegrated with each other. [Refer—Ram Rahasya Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 3, paragraph no. A.]

The Beej Mantra for Lord Ram is Raan(g)/Raam. [Refer—Ram Rahasya Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 2, verse no. 1-2.]

For his brothers Laxman it is Lam/Lan(g) (refer—Ram Rahasya Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 2, verse no. 98); for Bharat it is Bham/Bhang (refer—Ram Rahasya Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 2, verse no. 102); and for Shatrughan it is Shum/Shun Refer—Ram Rahasya Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 2, verse no. 103).

The Beej Mantra for Hanuman is H-rin(g)/H-rim (refer—Ram Rahasya Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 2, verse no. 105).

The Beej Mantra for Lord Shiva it is Haum/Haun(g); and for Lord Ganesh it is Gam/Gang.

The Beej Mantra for Goddesss Durga it is Dam/Dan9g); for Goddesss Bhuvaneshwari it is Hrim/Hrin(g); for Goddesss Kaali it is Krin(g)/Krim; for Goddess Vaamakshen it is String/Strim.

These root or seed Beej Mantras are used as a prefix or suffix to the main Mantra to have a multiplier effect and enhance the powers of the Mantra.

The *Tripura Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition says in its paragraph no. 4 that the Beej Mantra for Kaam (desires and passions) is the Sanskrit letter ‘Ka’ (as in kerb); in paragraph no. 9 it says that for the Sun it is the Sanskrit letter ‘Ha’ (as in hut), and for Moon it is ‘Sa’ (as in son).

The *Ram Rahasya Upanishad* of the Atharv Veda tradition, in its Canto 5, verse no. 3 says that the Beej Mantra for the fire element is the Sanskrit alphabet Ra (pronounced as rung or run).

The Ram Rahasya Upanishad then goes on to describe how this ‘Ra’ transforms its self into the supreme Brahm, the Parmatma, as well as the Pran (life factors) and Maya (delusion creating powers) of creation in its Canto 5, verse no. 4-5, 8. To quote—”Canto 5, verse no. 4 = When the long vowel sound ‘Aa’ (pronounced as in rather, father, barber) is added to this basic alphabet ‘Ra’ (as described in verse no. 3 and standing for the Fire), the resultant letter is ‘Raa’ (pronounced as in rather). It then stands for Pran and Maya—the magnificent virtues

of the Parmatma which enabled the latter to infuse life into the otherwise lifeless world, and create necessary delusions so that the inhabitants of this creation would remain perpetually involved in its sustenance, development and growth, and also to ensure that the wheel of creation set in motion by the Parmatma (the Supreme Being, the supreme Brahm) would continue to go round and round on its own till the time the Lord decides to stop its rotation.

Brahm, the Parmatma, is the one who injected 'Pran' (life) into this creation, and this is symbolized by the long vowel sound of 'Aa' because when we pronounce any word with this sound, the mouth has to be open wide which is an indication of vibrant, dynamic and energetic forms of life.

Similarly, Brahm is the one who created Maya or the numerous delusions that are the hallmarks of this artificial world. In fact, without the interference of delusion-creating powers of Brahm, the creature would not remain involved in this world inspite of being aware of its impermanent and miserable quotient.

It ought to be noted here, and this is a very important observation, that no consonant has any sound of its own without the interjection or infusion of the vowel sound in it. Therefore, this world represented by the pure consonant 'Ra' (pronounced as in goiter, guitar) would be lifeless and meaningless like the conclusion of creation (as indicated when these two English words are pronounced, and no sound lingers after that and the mouth closes), and not representing a vibrant, energetic, dynamic and chirpy world as it is known today had it not been injected with the long vowel sound 'Aa' (as in rather, father, barber) when the mouth is wide open to indicate signs of active and vibrant life (4).

"Canto 5, verse no. 5 = It is the conjunction of the consonant 'Ra' with the long vowel sound of 'Aa' that has created Pran or the vital factors of life in all their vibrant forms and dynamism in this world. [In other words, the dormant fire element represented by the alphabet 'Ra' is made to leap up and become active when it is injected with life represented by the vowel 'Aa'.]

This transformation of the simple letter 'Ra' into a symbol of life, dynamism, vibrancy and vitality is achieved by using the basic or fundamental sound of this consonant 'Ra', which is the half-syllable called 'Refa' in the Sanskrit language and it is depicted as a coma placed on the top of the following alphabet, making it sound as in 'whirr' or 'purr', followed by the long vowel sound of 'Aa' which is added to the resultant letter (as in rather).

Since the 'Refa' symbolizes the fire element because it is a half-syllable representing the consonant 'Ra' which in turn is the Beej Mantra of the fire element, it is deemed to be as brilliant and glowing as the fire element and its patron deity the Fire God. In other words, the 'Refa' stands for the supreme Brahm or pure cosmic Consciousness which is secretly present in the entire creation as its vital forces of life and energy as represented by the latent fire element as well as the vital winds called the Pran present universally in all forms of life in this world. Nothing is imaginable without Brahm—i.e. nothing can survive without the presence of the 'fire element', the 'life forces called the Pran' and the 'Atma or pure consciousness' which represents the the Parmatma.

[Each consonant of the language symbolizes one or the other aspect of creation, this statement means that it is Brahm in the form of the universal essential spark of life represented by the 'fire element' as well as the Pran and Maya Shakti that are also universal symbols of life and creation which is at the core of all that exists in this world. Without Brahm and its dynamism, nothing would exist and have a meaning. Since meaningful words are formed from these basic alphabets of the language, it also implies that anything worthwhile must have Brahm present in it. That is why Brahm is called the universal Truth and one factor that unites the entire creation and threads it into one single garland. Again, since letters would have no meaning if no words are formed from them, it also follows that the mere presence of Brahm or consciousness would not be sufficient to create and infuse colourful life in this creation. Towards this end, Brahm needs to have the support of 'Maya'—the maverick power of creating delusions that Brahm possesses, besides taking the assistance of the vital winds called 'Pran' which inject life, strength, vigour and vitality into the gross world.] (5)."

"Canto 5, verse no. 8 = The Bindu (dot) and the Naad (the crescent-shaped sign placed below the dot) are collectively called the 'Chandra-Bindu'. It is placed on the letter 'Raa' to form the Beej Mantra of Lord Ram—viz. 'Raam or Raang'. The letter 'Raa' with the Bindu or dot on top represents the Beej Mantra for the Fire, while the crescent-shaped sign placed below the Bindu or dot represents the Moon."

These root or seed Beej Mantras are used as a prefix or suffix to the main Mantra to have a 'multiplier effect' and enhance the powers of the Mantra.

The *Yog Kundalini Upanishad* of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 2, verse nos. 17-20 describes the Beej Mantra for the Khechari Vidya, the esoteric and mystical knowledge that enables the ascetic who practices this form of Yoga to fly or float in the sky. To quote—

The *Beej Mantra of Khechari Yoga* has been described in *Yog Kundalini Upanishad*, Canto 2, verse nos. 17-20, and Canto 3, verse no. 1. Now, let us examine what this Beej Mantra is.

"Canto 2, verse no. 17 = [Verse nos. 17-20 describe the Beej Mantra for doing Khechari Mudra of Yoga.]

A successful aspirant is able to become a leader of the Gods who roam in the sky; he obtains free access to the sky and can roam in it as he wishes¹.

Now, the primary Beej Mantra² of Khechari is being described. The Sanskrit alphabet 'Ha' represents the 'Khechar' aspect of this Mantra. [That is, the seed letter 'Ha' of the Mantra is the esoteric formula which injects into the main Mantra the mystical power that would enable the person who has mastered this Mantra's use to be able to fly or float in the sky or space.]

Similarly, the alphabet 'Ee' (as pronounced in eel, keen, feel), which is the long vowel sound and the fourth vowel of the Sanskrit language, represents the Dharna. [That is, this alphabet 'Ee' represents a firm determination and unwavering resolution on the part of the aspirant for obtaining success in this knowledge and its implementation. It indicates his

steadfastness of purpose and his ability to keep this Mantra in memory at all times during his sojourn in the sky. This is important, for should he forget it, he would fall back immediately. This is like an air plane pilot always remembering the intricate science of flying and running the air plane during flight, for otherwise it is impossible to fly a huge plane and to meet emergencies should they occur. There is no time to consult books in flight; it would be absolutely incredulous even to think in this term! It is also like the jet engine of a plane which is revving up for take-off.]

The fire element is represented by the alphabet 'Ra', and the water element by the 'Anuswar' (the dot placed on the top of an alphabet to give it the nasal sound)³.

The combined effect is the creation of the mystically charged esoteric letter 'Hrim or Hring'. The seed/root monosyllable Mantra Hrim or Hrin(g) stands for the 'Shakti' element of creation. This represents the cosmic energy and divine powers of creation which regulates everything in existence. It is therefore used to invoke the divine energy and seek its intercession on the behalf of the aspirant who uses this Mantra for worship. (17).

[Note—¹An aspirant who practices Khechari Yoga in a holistic manner along with the relevant Mantra dedicated to it is deemed to be as exalted as the Gods. He is not subjected to any of the physical limitations and grossness experienced by ordinary creatures whose movements are limited by the principles of physics because they have a gross body with fixed dimensions, weight, contour, constituent parts etc. For instance, it is not possible for any human being to float in the air without any aid as is a normal practice for the Gods, but Khechari Yoga enables him to achieve this super-human and magical feat.

An ordinary creature's physical compulsion of having to be limited to the ground and his inability to lift himself up and float in the air is symbolic of the fact that he is eternally bound to this mundane world of material sense objects, trapped and shackled to it for life. He lacks the will and the wherewithal to break free from this fetter. Yoga empowers him; it provides him with the necessary conducive environment and the instrument which can enable him to do so—to break free from the fetters of the body as well as the world and find his ultimate liberation and deliverance. By being able to float in the air due to success in Khechari Yoga, the aspirant should understand its great spiritual import and significance. He must realise that it indicates he has risen above the ordinary and mundane, and instead has attained an exalted spiritual stature where liberation and deliverance is just round the corner.

There is another way of looking at Khechari Yoga and its potential powers to make its followers equivalent to the exalted Gods. There are five basic elements—viz. earth, water, fire, air and sky in this order of subtlety, with the earth being the least subtle and the most gross, and the sky being the most subtle and the least gross. The ordinary life of miseries and pains where the aspirant remains engrossed in this world, when he has not yet stepped on the path of Yoga symbolises this earth element. He is like an ordinary creature rooted to the earth and unable to break free from its shackles and find freedom or the ability to lift himself up from the quagmire in which he has landed. On the other extreme end is the sky element symbolised by his ability to float in the air which he achieves by doing Khechari Yoga.

The air element is very much like the sky element and only slightly less subtle as is evident from the fact that it is only the air element that is able to fill the entire space of the sky as compared to other three elements. So, when the aspirant is able to practice Pranayam which indicates his ability to control the air element, it is deemed that he has obtained full control over this element of creation.

The next hurdle is the control of the water element which is done by practicing the various Bandhas, especially the Jalandhar Bandha which indicates his ability to directly overcome the hurdles created by the water element.

The fiercest and the most untamable of the five elements is the fire element. This is done by controlling the Kundalini and harnessing its stupendous energy during Yoga as described in the present Upanishad.

With these controls in place it is more than clear that there is little to differentiate between the practitioner of Yoga and the Gods. Such a person is indeed no less powerful than the Gods. He is deemed to have acquired the powers and virtues possessed by the Gods.

²The Beej Mantras are also called the seed or root Mantras. The word Beej refers to the fundamental, essential, elementary part of the Mantra. They are monosyllables which encrypt all the divine, spiritual, mystical and eclectic powers, potentials and authority possessed by the patron deity for which that particular Beej Mantra is meant. These Beej Mantras are used in formal ritualistic worship, as during fire sacrifices, in occult forms of worship when worship instruments consisting of geometrical lines and figures, called the Yantra, are employed much like we have the circuit diagrams in an electronic instrument, as well as for doing Japa or constant repetition of a particular letter or word or phrase having divine and mystical qualities in order to invoke their powers and potentials for the benefit of the aspirant, and meditation and contemplation. These Beej Mantras are added as a prefix or suffix to the main Mantra to enhance and multiply its effects and potentials. For example, the root/seed/Beej Mantra 'Ra' stands for Lord Ram as well as the fire element. In other words, when it is used during a formal form of worship, it would boost the effect of the main Mantra of Lord Ram as well as subtly inject it with the stupendous and magnificent powers of 'fire'.

They are monosyllables and are much like the alphabets used in science and mathematical equations to denote other elements or factors. They encrypt great secret powers of creation in them, and must be pronounced and used properly even as the different alphabets standing for different atoms in organic chemistry must be properly placed at their designated places to make any sense out of them; otherwise the entire complex chemical compound represented by these monosyllable alphabets would be meaningless. Even in algebra, we use alphabets to denote certain things, and then go on calculating on the basis of these hypothetical assumptions to arrive at conclusive results. This system is used in all spheres of science. Therefore we conclude that the use of these 'Beej' Mantras during occult practices and ritualistic forms of worship to invoke divine powers and seek results is like the time tested scientific method applied in the sphere of metaphysics.

³The fire element would be like the heat produced by the combustion of the plane's fuel which powers the engine and enables the heavier-than-air machine to leave the earth and become air borne. The water element would be like the coolants used to cool down the engine and other parts of the plane and prevent their overheating. In the case of Yoga we can visualise their practical contribution in lifting a person's body from the ground as follows—

The Khechhari Mudra is practiced not in isolation but in close coordination with other Mudras and Aasans (postures) of Yoga along with Bandhas (restrictions and closures of various apertures of the body), Pranayam (breath control), Shakti Chaalan and Kundali activation etc. as described earlier in Canto 1 of this Upanishad. All these activities generate heat in the body which in turn warms up the water content of the latter and creates subtle steam. Steam has immense power as is evident when it can turn turbines that generate electricity and move the piston of huge engines that power the steam locomotive or the ship on high seas. The same thing happens here though in a different way and at a different plane. The fire let loose by activation of the Kundalini not only provides heat to warm the body's fluid contents or its water element, but also the air element. Hot air is known to rise up as is seen in hot air balloons. The combined effect of these two primary elements of Nature, water and air, getting heated is that the body is lifted from the ground much like the lifting of the hot air balloon. The Kundalini present at the lower end of the body provides the fire that keeps the air and water elements sufficiently hot and activated. Since all exit points of the body have been closed tight shut due to various Bandhas, Aasans, Mudras and Pranayam, the only option for heated air and the steam trapped inside the body is to lift the latter up.]

“Canto 2, verse no. 18-20 = The Khechhari Yoga is accomplished by using this Mantra. The next part of the Mantra is as follows—The Beej Mantra representing the Som or Moon is the alphabet ‘Sa’ (pronounced as in sun or son). Before this is the letter ‘Bha’ (pronounced as in abhor) which is the ninth alphabet of the Sanskrit consonant when counted backwards from ‘Sa’, and is followed by the letter ‘Ma’ (pronounced as in mother) which is the eighth letter from ‘Sa’ when counted backwards. This letter ‘Ma’ is followed by the letter ‘Pa’ (pronounced as in punk, pun, Pundit) which is the fifth consonant when counted backwards from the letter ‘Sa’. The letter ‘Pa’ is followed by the letter representing the Moon, i.e. the letter ‘Sa’ once again. The last letter in this sequence is ‘Ksha’ which is a combination of the letters ‘Ka’ (pronounced as in kerb, kernel) and ‘Cha’ (pronounced as in champion).

The resultant Mantra is the following—Hrim + Bha + Sa + Ma + Pa + Sa + Ksha = ‘Hrim Bhum Sum Mum Pum Sum Kshum’ (18-20).

[Note—The Mantras have the nasal sign ‘Anuswar’ which is represented by putting a ‘dot’ over each letter to represent the fact that they are empowered with cosmic divine powers. The Anuswar is also called the Bindu, a dot. This Bindu has great metaphysical significance as described in numerous Upanishads that deal with Yoga and Naad (the ethereal sound of creation). The concept of Naad and Bindu, called the ‘Naad Shakti’, has been explained at length in Yogshikha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, Canto 1, verse nos. 105, 167, 178; Canto 2, verse no. 6; Canto 3, verse nos. 2-3, 11; Canto 4, verse no. 47; Canto 5, verse no. 28; and Canto 6, verse nos. 21, 48-49, 71-73.

The relationship between the Bindu, Naad and the Mana (the mind) has been described in Yogshikha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 178, Canto 6, verse nos. 71-73.

The Anuswar sounds like ‘um’ in the word ‘Rum’, or like ‘ung’ as in ‘Rung’. Hence, the alphabet ‘Bha’ becomes ‘Bhum’ or ‘Bhung’, and so on and so forth.]

“Canto 3, verse no. 1 = Lord Padmaj (i.e. Brahma the creator, so-called as he was born sitting aloft a divine lotus that emerged from the navel of the Viraat Purush in his manifestation as Vishnu at the beginning of creation) said (to Lord Shiva)—‘The Melan Mantra of Khechari is “Hrim Bhum Sum Mum Pum Sum Kshum”. [Refer Canto 2, verse nos. 5 and 17-20 for detail.]

Oh Shiva! Please tell me what is the significance of the three cardinal days of Amaavasya (the day of the dark moon), Pratipada (the first day of each half of the lunar month), and Purnamaasi (the day of the full moon) as described in relation to this Melan Mantra’ (1).”

The *Dhyanbindu Upanishad*, verse nos. 95-99 of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition not only describes the *colours* of the five principle winds collectively called the *Prans*, but also *their Beej Mantras* as follows:—

“Verse no. 95—Above this so-called triangle is the site where the brain is located, and therefore is the site where the thinking powers, the powers mind and intellect to contemplate and fix attention on something, to discriminate and analyse, as well as constructive powers of imagination are located.

Focusing one’s attention here, the aspirant should next meditate and contemplate upon the basic elements of creation such as the earth etc. (the others being water, fire, air and space) as well as the five vital Prans (winds such Pran, Apaana, Vyan, Udaana and Samaana) along with their root words (called the ‘Beej’ letter that symbolise them and represent their inherent subtle strength and powers), their specific distinguishing marks and classifications (called their ‘Varns’), and their location (called their ‘Sthaan’) in this creation.

The Beej or seed letter of the Pran wind (the primary air which infuses life inside the gross body; the breath) is the Sanskrit alphabet ‘Ya’. It has the hue of purple or violet or reddish blue, and it represents the rain bearing clouds that are harbingers of life on earth.

The Beej or seed letter of the Apaana wind (the primary air which moves downwards in the body and helps in food intake and its movement through the intestines, its digestion and elimination from the body) is the Sanskrit alphabet ‘Ra’. It has the hue of golden yellow resembling the brilliant sun, and represents the fire element.

“Verse no. 96—The Beej or seed letter of the Vyan wind (the primary wind that helps in maintaining equilibrium and pressure within the body, and it also controls the functioning of the other winds) is the Sanskrit alphabet ‘La’. It has the hue of red like the colour of the flower called ‘Bandhuk’ (a flower that blooms in the middle of the day), and it represents the earth element.

The Beej or seed letter of the Udaana wind (the primary wind that helps the body to rise and move about, it also helps the body to expel toxic waste gases in the body through the

nostrils and mouth in the form of exhalation and cough) is the Sanskrit alphabet 'Va'. It has the hue of shining white like that of the conch shell, and it represents the Jiva or the living being in this creation.

“Verse no. 97—The Beej or seed letter of the Samaan wind (the primary wind that helps the body in equal distribution of nourishment throughout it, as well as in circulation of blood rise) is the Sanskrit alphabet 'Ha'. It has the hue of the colour crystal, and it represents the taintless, colourless and pristine pure sky element in creation.”

The *Beej Mantras for the five primary elements of creation*—viz. earth, water, fire, air and sky, have been elaborately described in the *Yogtattva Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse nos. 85-102. These verses describe in detail the five primary elements, their locations in the body, their colours, their Beej Mantras and their patron Gods. It also goes on to describe how meditation is to be done on these five elements as manifestations of the stupendous dynamic powers of Brahm which has enabled this existence to come into being and sustain itself independently, as well as the rewards or benefits of such meditation. To quote—

“Verse no. 85 = The earth element is present as a dominant force from the foot to the knees. This earth has four directions, has a subtle yellow colour, and its seed Mantra is the Sanskrit letter (Varna) 'La' (as in 'love'). [There is another connotation of this last part of the verse. The earth is said to contain large and infinite deposits of 'salts' as ores etc. The ocean is also salty. The last word of this verse, i.e. 'Lavarna', indicates this fact.] (85).

“Verse no. 86 = This is the place where the patron God of earth known as Brahma, the four armed and four headed¹ creator of creation, has his symbolic presence. [In other words, the earth is represented by the creator Brahma. This is because the entire living world as we know it is present here on earth and no other planet. The earth is the only known inhabited part of the entire creation where creatures having life and consciousness in them—right from the one-celled amoeba up to the most complex and intelligently developed ones like the humans—live.]

In order to witness his presence and have his (Brahma's) subtle vision, the ascetic should inject and cover the earth element along with its seed Mantra 'La' with the vital winds or airs so that they are blended and a harmony is established between them. This results in the revelation of Brahma with the above features and with the complexion of gold (86).

[Note—¹There is a lot of symbolism in Hinduism, and if it is not properly understood in the correct context, a lot of hilarious, absurd and ridiculous situations arise, such as this Brahma with 'four arms and four heads'. From a rational perspective, this is absolute rubbish. But if one were to understand the underlying symbolism and philosophy, things assume a rational meaning. The four heads of Brahma stand for the four Vedas he created or pronounced. These Vedas are the repositories of all knowledge that exist in this creation, and they are the Rig, Sam, Yajur and Atharva. The four arms stand for the four directions of the globe—the north, west, south and east. Since he is the creator of the visible creation, he is expected to take care of the entire earth because it is on earth that all living creatures created by him would live.

Therefore, his four arms are symbolic of his duty and ability of taking care of all the four corners of this living world, and the four Vedas indicate his all-encompassing and all-inclusive knowledge, wisdom and erudition that empower and enable him to do so.

The colour of gold indicates the colour of richness, prosperity and fertility. The egg's yolk is also yellow because it harbours life and is rich with all essential nutrients needed by the nascent creation in its miniature form as the embryo.]

“Verse no. 87 = By concentrating one's attention and doing meditation for a period of five Ghatis (two hours) in the above described manner, an ascetic is able to conquer or subdue the earth element; he becomes the Lord of this element. Such an ascetic never dies due to some kind of shortcoming, fault, weakness or imperfection of the earth element in the body, or any injury caused by it to the body (87).

“Verse no. 88 = The water element has a predominant presence in the region from the knee to the anus. It is symbolically shaped like a half-moon, and its seed Mantra is ‘Vam’ (as in ‘vulgar + sum’) (88).

“Verse no. 89-90 = This is the place of symbolic residence of the patron God of water known as Sri Narayan (Lord Vishnu), the four armed, exalted and high Lord who has a crown over his head¹ (indicative of his position as the Lord and emperor of the entire living world), who is pure as crystal (because he is untainted, without any blemish and cannot be demoted from his exalted stature in spite of the fact that he has to look after the routine chores of taking care of the mundane affairs of the multifaceted world ridden with corruption and blemishes of all imaginable types, being its sustainer, nourisher and protector), and who is wearing a yellow coloured cloth (symbolic of his ability to sustain, nourish and protect the world as its emperor).

In order to witness his presence and have his subtle vision, the ascetic should inject and cover the water element along with its seed Mantra ‘Vam’ with the vital winds or airs so that they are blended and a harmony is established between them. This results in the revelation of Narayan with the above features in his inner self. He should focus his attention and mind on this vision for a period of five Ghantis (two hours). This helps him in getting rid of all sins and their evil consequences (89-90).

[Note—¹Lord Vishnu is the sustainer, nourisher and protector of all creatures. His four arms are indicative of this unique ability of his. Now, let us see what are those four units of creation which he is supposed to look after.

There are four types of creatures—viz. (i) ‘Andaj’ (those born from an egg, e.g. birds; (ii) ‘Swadej’ (those born from sweat and dampness, e.g. bacteria, fungi and lice; (iii) ‘Udbhij’ (those born from seeds, e.g. plants; and (iv) ‘Jarayuj’ (those born from an embryo inside the womb, e.g. a man).

Then we have four classes of people in the society, called the four Varanas, and each has four phases, called the four Ashrams. The Hindu society has been divided into four sections or classes by ancient sages to regulate its functioning by delegation of authority and clearly specifying the jobs each section is supposed to do to maintain order and system in the world, to prevent overlapping of functions and avoid anarchy and chaos. These four sections are— (a) Brahmins—the learned and teaching class; a wise

one well-versed in the knowledge of the ultimate Truth about the supernatural Being called Brahm. They also presided over religious functions as priests, because these functions were central to life in the Vedic period; (b) Kshatriyas—they were the warrior, fighting, kingly class. They were assigned the job of giving protection to the society, dispensing justice and maintaining general law and order. (c) Vaishyas—they were the trading and farming class responsible for commerce and wealth generation. They provided for the necessities for a comfortable life. And finally (d) the Shudras —the service class of people whose main function was to free the other three classes from the humdrums of daily chores and concentrate their energies to the particular jobs assigned to those classes to which they belonged.

Finally, the four Ashrams are the following—(a) Brahmacharya—this is the 1st phase of life in which a person studies the scriptures under the tutelage of a wise teacher. This phase of life is marked by austerities, keeping of vows, observing celibacy, abstinence and continence as well as leading a regimental life style of a boarding school. (b) Grihasta—when a person has studied and prepared himself to face the world, he comes back to his house and enters the 2nd phase called Grihasta Ashram which is a householder's life. He marries, raises a family, produces wealth and helps to carry forward the cycle of creation. This is the most important and enjoyable phase as well as the most tough one because on the one hand there are the comforts and pleasure of the world to be enjoyed, and on the other hand there are the various tribulations and miseries of a family life alongside the dealings with this deceptive world with all its accompanying horrifying problems. (c) Vanprastha—this is the 3rd phase when a man hands over the responsibilities of the world to his heirs and renounces his attachments to the house as well as the world, and heads for the forest, leaving the home for his next generation. It is now that he goes on pilgrimage and prepares for the final stage of his life, and (d) Sanyas—this is the 4th and last stage of life when there is complete cutting-off of all the ties with the world, spending time in contemplation and meditation, living a life of total renunciation, and begging for food for survival while single mindedly endeavouring for emancipation and salvation. This phase of Sanyas also has many stages depending upon the spiritual elevation and accomplishments of the aspirant, viz. Kutichak, Bahudak, Hansa, Paramhans, Turiyatit and Avadhut.

These four Ashrams, their characteristic features and virtues are described in detail in an Upanishad called 'Ashramo-panishad' belonging to the Atharva Veda tradition.

Thus we see that the four arms of Vishnu are indicative of his unique ability to protect the entire world of living creatures.]

“Verse no. 91 = After that, the ascetic need not fear from the water element in anyway, and neither would he die due to it (such as by drowning or by dehydration or thirst).

The fire element has its dominant presence from the anus to the heart region. [That is why all digestion of food and all the major internal organs that are responsible for the upkeep of the body and to continue the cycle of creation and prevent its extinguishing, such as the intestines, kidneys, the reproductive organs, the pancreas etc. are located in this region. It is here that the Kundalini is also located at the base of the spine. Without the presence of the heat in the lower part of the body, the vital airs cannot be heated and empowered to lift the body of

an ascetic as has been described in verse no. 53-55 above. In practical life also we observe that the fire is always present at the lower end of the oven and not on its top.] (91).

“Verse no. 92 = The fire element has three corners (i.e. it is shaped symbolically like a triangle), has a red colour and the Sanskrit letter ‘Ra’ (as in ‘run’) as its seed or root Mantra. This fire should be stoked and ignited by injecting the air or wind element into it. [This is a common day phenomenon that the fire needs air to remain burning.] (92).

“Verse no. 93 = This is the symbolic abode of Lord Rudra or Shiva. [That is, he symbolises the fire element.] One should meditate upon this Lord who has three eyes¹, who is the one renowned for granting boons (to his followers and devotees, and in the presence case to the ascetic), who is as splendid, illuminated and radiant as a sun which has just risen, and who has the ash of the fire sacrifice smeared all over his body (just like an ascetic, indicating that he is their great icon and patron deity of ascetics) (93).

[Note—¹As in the case of Brahma and Vishnu, the symbolism of Shiva having three eyes, which on the face of it appears to be an anomaly, is the following—his two eyes are the conventional eyes, and his third symbolises his deep insight and great wisdom and enlightenment. Shiva personifies the fire element which also has a symbolic significance. The fire is known to burn all impurities present in gold when it is put into it, thereby purifying the metal. Similarly, fire is used in blast furnaces to extract iron from its ore. Fire has the inherent ability to reduce to ashes all filth and garbage, which is a metaphoric way of saying that a person who has worshipped this element in the form of Shiva is supposed to have burnt all his faults, blemishes and shortcomings that taint his character and soul, thereby purifying his inner self. The ash is indicative of total renunciation and detachment from the world of materialism, because it is indicative of a renunciate way of life and symbolically stands for burning of everything into the fire pit. That is why Lord Shiva has been called the patron God of ascetics, hermits and Sanyasis who worship the fire element only.

Besides these points, Shiva is the God assigned the task of concluding the world which necessitates his being closely associated with the ‘fire element’ in the sense that he must be as unrelenting, merciless, powerful and ferocious as the latter in order to conclude this creation inspite of all the odds. He must reduce everything to ashes just like the fire does. And it is from this ash that the new creation would emerge in due course. Herein lie the magic of creation and its chief Lord, Brahm, the Supreme Being—the fact that a new creation rises from ashes!]

“Verse no. 94 = By meditating this way on the fire element and Lord Shiva for a period of five Ghantis (two hours), the ascetic cannot be tormented by the fire element so much so that it cannot burn or scorch him even if he is made to enter a fiercely burning fire (94).

“Verse no. 95 = The next vital primary element is the air element and it is primarily located in the body between the heart and the middle of the eyebrows in the forehead. It has a symbolic shape of a hexagon, is dark hued, and its seed or root Mantra is the Sanskrit letter ‘Ya’ (as in ‘yearn’). The apex of this hexagon is at the point in the forehead where the two eyebrows meet, and where the third eye of wisdom is said to be located. That is why it is said to possess the quality of ‘Bhaasvar’, i.e. to be as bright as the sun during the day time (95).

[Note—In practical terms also, the primary wind that sustains life inside the otherwise dead and inane body is the breath that is inhaled thorough the nose and diverted to the lungs. Both these organs are located in the body in the region between the heart and the mid point of the eyebrows. If we join these organs, i.e. if a line is drawn linking the two lobes of the lungs, the triangular heart, the two shoulders and the root of the nose which has two openings, we will come with a rough shape of a hexagon. The lower-end point would be roughly the lower end of the sternum (i.e. the mid point between the heart and the lungs, the middle of the body where the ribs meet and the heart is felt to throb), and the other end is the root of the nose between the two eyebrows. Since the lower end is embedded in the abdomen, it is said to be ‘dark or Krishna’ in hue, while the upper end is said to be ‘Bhaasvar’ or like the sun because it is the location of the two eyes as well as the third eye of wisdom.]

“Verse no. 96 = The vital air or wind element is located in the body in the designated place marked by the letter ‘Ya’ of the Sanskrit language (as described in verse no. 95). The ascetic should always remember the all-knowing, omniscient and all-pervading Lord of all creation, known as Ishwar, in this region. This Lord is called ‘Vishwatomukham’, literally the face of the entire world (96).

[Note—The Ishwar is called the ‘face of the world’ obviously because when we see anyone, we first see his face and the person is recognised by his face. Since the entire creation is the visible manifestation of the supreme Brahm, it is the visible face of Brahm or Ishwar. This Ishwar is also the all-pervading supreme Brahm in the form of the conscious Atma which resides in the individual creature as his true ‘self’, as well as in the form of the universal Spirit that is indistinguishable from the air or wind element which pervades throughout the world. Even as the air element is uniformly and universally present everywhere in this creation, this ‘spirit’ is therefore also present in equal measure everywhere. This spirit in the form of the air element is Ishwar or Lord of the world in the sense that no life is possible without it on this earth.]

“Verse no. 97 = If the ascetic meditates upon the supreme Lord called Vishwatomukh for a continuous period of five Ghantis (two hours), he can travel or move about in the sky just like the wind or air element. [In other words, he becomes as light as the air or wind element.] He has no fear from this element anymore and he never dies due to this element. [In other words, he never suffers from any disease related to the air or wind in the body such as from asthma, flatulence, improper movement of bowels, digestion, distribution of nutrients and blood inside the body, and all other functions that are governed by one or the other vital winds inside the body. He has not to suffer from suffocation and the fear from falling from a high place and dieing because in that case he would float in the air. Storms and other fierce forms of the wind cannot harm him also.] (97).

“Verse no. 98 = The sky element is located between the point midway of the two eyebrows and the top of the head. It is shaped like the sky (i.e. featureless, measureless and like an inverted parabolic transparent dish or bowl), is of the colour of smoke, and its seed or root Mantra is the Sanskrit letter ‘Ha’ (as in ‘hut’). It is illuminated with a diffused light like the sky is during the daytime (98).

“Verse no. 99 = The ascetic should inject this sky element and fill it with the air or wind, and visualise that Lord Shankar (Shiva) is present here, seated on the letter ‘Ha’¹. This Lord is a personification of the great Lord of all the Gods, and hence also known as Mahadeva², literally the great God. This Mahadeva is like a dot or point³ on the one hand, and like the vast, endless, featureless and infinite sky⁴ on the other hand. In the latter form he is known as Sada Shiva⁵, i.e. the eternal and ever-present Lord Shiva (99).

[Note—¹There is a lot of brilliant symbolism here. The letter ‘Ha’ is the first letter of the word ‘Hans’, meaning the divine swan. This bird is said to be very clean and wise, and therefore is the vehicle of the goddess of learning and wisdom, goddess Saraswati. By saying that the patron Lord of the sky element sits on this letter ‘Ha’, it is meant that this Lord is wisdom, erudition, learning and knowledge personified, he has full command over them. Hence he is the supreme Brahm.

²By this logic, Shankar is another name of Brahm. Since Brahm is the one from whom the entire creation has emerged, he is the greatest of all the Gods and their Lord, hence he is called Mahadeva. Thus, Mahadeva and Shankar become interchangeable and synonymous.

³The origin of the creation was due to a vibration in the cosmic primordial gel much like ripples on the surface of a calm lake. This generated waves and these waves created energy to power the initial phases of the process of creation. But the vibration must have started from one single point. This is the ‘dot’ referred in this verse. It also refers to the fact that everything in existence has its origin from one ‘point’ source known as Brahm. The concept of Bindu and ‘dot’ have been explained in Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 2, 37, 39-40, and Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 1, 5 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition.

⁴Now, this Brahm is not limited to one single point, but it spread as far and wide as the vast sky could spread. It was diffused in the sky like smoke, and that is why the colour of the sky element is symbolically depicted to be like that of the smoke.

⁵‘Shiva’ means someone who is auspicious, truthful and beautiful, and ‘Sada’ means one who is always the same, is constant, perpetual, consistent, ever-present, uniform and universal. All these qualities are present in the supreme Brahm. That is why the latter is called Sada Shiva.

So in a nutshell, Shankar and Shiva is the same great God who is the Lord of all the Gods as well as of the rest of the creation, i.e. the supreme transcendental Brahm, the Supreme Being, personified, besides possessing all the qualities of wisdom, erudition, sagacity, knowledge, expertise, various skills etc. personified by goddess Saraswati riding on the Hans. The concept of ‘Hans’ has been elaborately explained in a number of Upanishads, viz. (a) Krishna Yajur Veda—Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 6; Canto 6, verse no. 15; Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 3-4; Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 24, 61-65; Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 16, 20-28, 34, 60-64, 78-79; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 131-132, Canto 2, verse nos. 9-11, and Canto 6, verse no. 20, 52-54. (b) Shukla Yajur Veda—Hansopanishad is exclusively dedicated to explain the concept of the pure conscious Atma by way of using the metaphor of a Hans. (c) Sam Veda—Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse no. 82-83.]

“Verse no. 100 = This Lord Shiva is most pure and immaculate, and as clear and clean as pure crystal. He has a crescent moon tucked in the lock of hairs on his head. He has five mouths, is very sober, gentle and pleasant, has ten arms and three eyes (100).

[Note—Since Lord Shiva is the patron God of Yogis or those ascetics who do Yoga, especially those who practice its exercises and rituals as propounded by Patanjali, and this Upanishads deals with Yoga, the supreme transcendental Supreme Being known as Brahm of metaphysics and Upanishads is personified here in him.

Lord Shiva has been depicted in the Purans as having a crescent moon on his forehead. The moon is said to have sixteen Kalaas or phases, symbolising the sixteen Kalaas or aspects out of the total of sixty four Kalaas of the supreme Brahm. These sixteen Kalaas represent the visible world which is one fourth part of the entire creation consisting of the remaining of the Kalaas of Brahm. The visible world is called ‘one Pada’ or one leg or one aspect or Kalaa of Brahm. So, Shiva is the Lord who presides over the entire visible part of creation, and this world is his ornamentation in the sense that the Lord appears to be so beautiful if we consider the beauty of Nature as the astounding beauty and the expert craftsmanship of Shiva on display.

The five heads of Shiva stand for the ‘Panch Vyom’ or the five forms that the sky element is said to have. According to Vedanta, the concept of the sky or ‘Akash’ has many connotations. According to one interpretation, there are five subtle skies representing the space surrounding the five sheaths or Koshas present in the body of a creature. They are the sheaths that surround the Atma and are called ‘Panch Akash’. These are the following—(1) the Food Sheath called Anna Maye Kosh; (2) the Vital Air Sheath called Pran Maye Kosh; (3) the Mental Sheath called Manomaye Kosh; (4) the Intelluctual Sheath called Vigyan Maye Kosh; and (5) the Bliss Sheath called Anand Maye Kosh. Ref.— Mudgal Upanishad, 4/5 of the Rig Veda.

The ten arms of Shiva stand for the ten forms of the subtle sky element. They are the following—(1) Ghatakash—the space inside a hollow pot; (2) Mathakash—the space inside a holy building, such as a holy shrine, a monastery, an abbey etc.; (3) Hridayakash—the subtle space inside the heart; (4) Akash—the vacant or blank space above the earth; (5) Suryakash—the space of the solar system; the space around the sun, or the solar system illuminated by the light of the sun; (6) Paraakash— the space above or beyond the solar system, it is said to burn with the celestial fire; (7) Mahakash— the great sky that is aglow with divine illumination, the heaven; that space which is radiant with a divine glow; (8) Paramakash— the supreme sky beyond the Mahakash, it is said to be very magnificent and encloses everything that exists, including all the other skies; that space which is illuminated, all pervading, all encompassing and full of bliss and felicity; (9) Tattwakash— the elementary space that is at the core of the concept of space, or the space that surrounds the basic elements of creation; by natural corollary it refers to the subtle, sublime, ethereal and supreme space where the eternal, transcendental Brahm has his abode because Brahm is the cause of all the basic elements of creation; there is complete beatitude and felicity there; that space which surrounds the essential truth known as Brahm; and (10) Anatariksha—the physical space where stars are present

in deep space; the inter-galactic space. Besides these, there is one more space called 'Swarga' which means heaven or the Duloka.

These skies have been ascribed different names just to facilitate understanding, and not because any one form of sky is fundamentally different from the other. For example, the space present inside the mud-pot, called the Ghata-kash, is the same as the space present outside the body of the pot. When the pot is broken, the demarcation wall of the body of the pot is removed, and both the space inside and outside of the erstwhile pot become indistinguishably and inseparably the same. Therefore, the various names are artificial and misnomers.

The three eyes consist of two normal conventional eyes and the third eye of wisdom and deep insight.]

"Verse no. 101 = That Lord Shiva is armed with all types of weapons (as a symbol of protection against or to counter all sorts of worldly evils and faults that might attack a spiritual aspirant and attempt to pull him down from the exalted position that he has acquired by so hard effort). He is also decorated with numerous ornaments (as a symbol of his divine beauty and magnificence, as a token of his natural charm and a pleasant and appealing appearance). Goddess Parvati his divine consort and she literally is his other half. [That is, if Shiva is the supreme Brahm or Supreme Being, Parvati is his Prakriti and Maya. If Shiva is the Viraat Purush, Parvati is Mother Nature.] He is the one who grants boons and is the root and primary cause of all conceivable causes and reasons that exist in this world (101).

"Verse no. 102 = If that Lord Shiva is meditated upon as a personification of the sky element and as being inherently present in this element, it is certain that the practitioner is able to acquire the mystical powers to move through the sky (like a bird or other sky-borne creatures).

By this meditation, the spiritual aspirant feels an immense sense of satisfaction and happiness no matter where he lives¹ (102).

[Note—¹This is because he feels the freedom to move about any where he likes, and is not constrained to the earth. Another interpretation is that he feels as light as the air or wind element because this is the only element that fills the entire space of the sky and can move in at its will. He feels unrestrained and free like the bird. He also feels untainted, unblemished, un-faulted and untarnished like the pure and colourless sky element. He feels infinite, vast, open, eternal and imperishable as the sky element. He feels himself as being all-pervading, omnipresent and all-covering just like the sky element. This notion and feeling would naturally be spiritually and emotionally uplifting and morale boosting for him; he would feel elated and accomplished.]"

Now let us examine some of the great Upanishads that describe various divine Mantras.

(a) The eclectic Mantra *So-a-Ham*—This Mantra has been described in a number of Upanishads—viz. (i) Sam Veda = Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse no. 83. (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda = Braham Vidya Upanishad, verse no. 34, 78-79; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 131-133; Panch Brahm Upanishad, verse no. 28; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 17, Canto 4, verse nos. 1.11-2, Canto 5, verse nos. 69-72.

Let us see what these Upanishads have to say on the subject.

Brahm Vidya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda—78-79 = All spiritual aspirants who have a gross body (and of course are wise and enlightened) should constantly contemplate upon and visualise the ubiquitous presence of the supreme Lord who is faultless and immaculate, who is all-pervading, all-encompassing and omnipresent in this creation. While doing this, he should constantly repeat the divine eclectic Mantra ‘Hans-Hans’. [In other words, the aspirant should constantly remind himself that he is no one else but the supreme Brahm himself personified. This is because another form of the Mantra is ‘So-a-Ham’, meaning ‘that is me’. Refer verse nos. 16, 20-28, 34, 60-64.]

This type of Japa (repetition of the Mantra) done constantly and involuntarily is called ‘A-Japa Japa’, i.e. repetition of the Mantra in an involuntarily way and without being consciously aware of it being done at all¹.

This type of Japa involves a coordination of the Pran and Apaana winds. [This is because inhalation of breath during the Purak phase is known as the Pran, while the exhalation done during the Rechak phase is called Apaana.] Since a man breathes roughly twenty one thousands time during the course of a day, this is the number of times this Mantra ‘So-a-Ham’ is automatically repeated (78-79).

[Note—¹It is called ‘A-Japa Japa’ because this repetition is done involuntarily and without any special effort or attention paid to its repetition. The practitioner is not even aware that he is repeating any Mantra because it is directly linked to the normal breathing process which is an involuntary and an automatic biological process done constantly and without break, even while a person sleeps or goes about his daily chores of life—refer verse no. 16 and its note. The prefix ‘A’ indicates negation, and therefore this repetition of the Mantra Hans is not regarded as doing a Japa in the conventional sense when special attention is focused on repeating any Mantra during some religious ritual or practicing Yoga. It is automatic and involuntary. So when the spiritual aspirant has risen to a level of awareness and enlightenment when he becomes aware of the spiritual importance of each breath that comes in and goes out of his body as representing the two limbs of the Mantra for Brahm, i.e. the letters ‘Ha’ and ‘Sa’ or the combined word ‘Hans’, he is deemed to have become Brahm-realised. Only then can he say that he is repeating the Mantra ‘So-a-Ham’ meaning ‘that Brahm is me as my true self known as the pure consciousness or Atma’.]

Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse no. 34 = A wise and enlightened man who remains engrossed in repeating the eclectic and divine Mantra ‘Hans-Hans’ (i.e. ‘*So-a-Ham’ meaning ‘that essence or Truth or Brahm is me’) is indeed an auspicious personification of the Trinity Gods, i.e. of Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer and protector, and Shiva the concluder. He can be successful, by the grace and blessing of his enlightened Guru, in becoming aware or realising the ubiquitous supreme Brahm who all-pervading, all-encompassing and all-incorporating (34).

The *Yogshikha Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, Canto 1, verse no. 131-133 describes the importance of this great Mantra ‘So-a-Ham’ as follows—

“Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 131 = Usually everyone uses the Mantra ‘Hans-Hans’ to do Japa (repetition). But by the grace of a wise teacher the ascetic realises that the real Mantra that ought to be repeated during the course of Yoga in which the wind rises up in the Sushumna Naadi is ‘So-a-ham, So-a-ham’¹ (131).

[Note—Refer Canto 2, verse nos. 5, 8-11 and Canto 6, verse no. 20, 51-54 of this Upanishad which highlight the importance and significance of this Mantra. Briefly this Mantra means ‘That is me’; or ‘that supreme transcendental entity in none but me’. The word ‘me’ refers to the awareness of the pure consciousness and does not refer to the physical gross body of the ascetic. The word ‘Hans’ literally means a Swan which is considered as the wisest bird and is used as a metaphor for something that is extremely pure and divine. Hans is the vehicle of Saraswati, the goddess of wisdom and knowledge, as a symbolic iconographic depiction of the fact that the auspicious virtues of enlightenment, wisdom, erudition and possession of truthful knowledge of the reality are borne by an entity that is called Hans. In the realm of metaphysics, this Hans refers to the Atma, the pure and conscious ‘self’ of the creature. That is why this Mantra ‘Hans-Hans’ is same as ‘So-a-ham’; the latter is the implied and essential meaning of the Mantra ‘Hans’. Since a Yogi is expected to choose the best and leave aside the not-so-important aspect of anything, he chooses the Mantra ‘So-a-ham’ over the Mantra ‘Hans’.

There are a number of Upanishads that describe the Mantra ‘Hans’—viz. (a) Krishna Yajur Veda—Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 6; Canto 6, verse no. 15; Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 3-4; Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 24, 61-65; Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 16, 20-28, 34, 60-64, 78-79; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 9-11, Canto 6, verse no. 20, 52-54; Yogtattva Upanishad, verse no. 99. (b) Shukla Yajur Veda—Hansopanishad is exclusively dedicated to explain the concept of the pure conscious Atma by way of using the metaphor of a Hans. (c) Sam Veda—Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse no. 31-35, 82-83, 93.

The Mantra So-a-Ham—This Mantra is extolled in a number of Upanishads as a synonymous of the Mantra ‘Hans’. For instance—(i) Sam Veda = Yogchudani Upanishad, verse no. 83. (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda = Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse no. 34, 78-79.]

“Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 132 = [This verse describes what is known as Mantra Yoga.]

The Yoga done with the aid of this eclectic Mantra ‘So-a-ham’ is the one which is called ‘Mantra Yoga’. The divine effects of this Mantra is witnessed through the ‘Paschim Dwaar’, the left nostrils (from where the elixir of bliss and happiness, called Amrit, drips and tasted by the ascetic—refer verse no. 127). [In other words, when the ascetic does Pranayam using the left nostril to draw in air, the Mantra which he should use is So-a-ham.] (132).

“Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 133 = ‘The letter ‘Ha’ of the Mantra So-a-ham stands for the sun and its divine glories. The letter ‘Sa’ of the Mantra So-a-ham stands for the moon and its divine glories’—when the ascetic does the full exercise of Yoga with this eclectic understanding and faith, he symbolically establishes a union between these two divine entities because they are part of the same Mantra. Such Yoga is called ‘Hath Yoga’ (133).

[Note—The letter ‘Sa’ is a silent sound made while one draws in breath, i.e. does Purak, and since this is done through the Ida Naadi, also called the Moon Naadi passing thorough the left nostril, it represents the Moon God. On the other hand, the letter ‘Ha’ is the silent sound made while exhaling breath through the Pingla Naadi, called the Surya Naadi passing through the right nostrils, and hence it stands for the Sun God. In other words, the letter ‘Sa’ is the Mantra for the Moon God and ‘Ha’ is the Mantra for the Sun God. During the Kumbhak phase of Pranayam, both exhalation and inhalation are stopped and a mixing of the air takes place inside the body. This would be tantamount to bringing together of the Moon and the Sun. The Sun is hot while the Moon is cool; therefore this process neutralizes them both and brings about evenness and homogeneity. All restlessness, agitation, state of flux and fidgeting are stopped. A state of profound calmness and serenity is established. This process of doing Pranayam by inhaling through the left nostril symbolising the Moon God and exhaling through the right nostril symbolising the Sun God has been outlined in Krishna Yajur Veda’s Yog Kundali Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 9-17. It is called ‘Saraswati Chaalan’.]”

The *Varaaha Upanishad*, Canto 2, verse no. 17 of Krishna Yajur Veda describes the Mantra ‘So-a-Ham’ in these terms—”You should realise how basically and inherently exalted and divine your true self is. Your ‘self’ is known by the phrase ‘So-a-ham’—i.e. ‘that is me’. The ‘that’ in this statement refers to the divine entity which is a witness for and to all the three worlds (the past, the present and the future), is characterised by the glorious virtues of Satya (absolute truth), Gyan (absolute knowledge and enlightenment), and Anand (absolute bliss) etc. (as described in verse no. 16). [In other words, the term ‘So’ or ‘that’ refers to the supreme transcendental Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness, the divine entity that possesses the three glorious virtues of truthfulness, knowledge and bliss. In a similar vein, the term ‘Ham’ or ‘me/I’ refers to the Atma which is a microcosmic representative and an image of the cosmic Consciousness that resides in the bosom of the aspirant as the ‘self’, and therefore possesses the same divine virtues as possessed by its parent. In fact and essence, there is no difference between them.]

Hence, you must realise the greatness of your ‘true self’ which has these eclectic and magnificent virtues in it. You are therefore free from all faults, taints, corruptions and shortcomings (associated with ignorant fools who aren’t aware of the reality and the truth about their own selves) (17).”

(b) The Mantra *Hans*—There are a number of Upanishads that describe the Hans Mantra—viz. (a) Krishna Yajur Veda—Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 6; Canto 6, verse no. 15; Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 3-4; Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 24, 61-65; Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 16, 20-28, 34, 60-64, 78-79; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 131, Canto 2, verse nos. 5, 9-11, Canto 6, verse no. 20, 53-54; Yogtattva Upanishad, verse no. 99; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 52, 54-55. (b) Shukla Yajur Veda—Hansopanishad is exclusively dedicated to explain the concept of the pure conscious Atma by way of using the metaphor of a Hans. (c) Sam Veda—Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse no. 31-35, 82-83, 93.

The *Yogchudamani Upanishad*, verse no. 82-83 of Sam Veda tradition describes this Swan in the context of Yoga. Let us see what it has to say in this context—

“Verse 82—The ‘Hansa’ (हंस—literally a divine swan) resides gloriously and majestically in the center of the two eyes of a creature during the waking state of consciousness. The letter ‘Sa’ (सकारः) of the Hindi/Sanskrit alphabet represents the ‘Khechhari Mudra’ of the Yogi which is certainly the personification or the image of the word ‘Twam’ (त्वं) (82).

Verse 83—The letter ‘Ha’ (हकारः) represents the supreme Lord of creation, called ‘Parmeshwar’ which is certainly symbolised or represented by the word ‘Tat’ (तत्). [That is, the two syllables of the word ‘Hansa’, meaning the divine swan, are ‘Han’ (हं) and ‘Sa’ (स) which stand for the two words of metaphysics which have profound impact—the 2nd word is ‘Twam’ and the 1st is ‘Tat’ corresponding to these two syllables respectively.]¹ Any person who concentrates his mind and attention, and contemplates and meditates upon the letter ‘Sa’ shall surely become akin to, or equivalent to the form or the image represented by the letter ‘Ha’. This is called contemplating upon and practicing of the twin tenets of ‘So-a-ham’ and ‘Tattwa-masi’ (83) [82-83].

[Note—¹The Upanishadic sage establishes uniformity and oneness with the two great philosophies and metaphysical concepts of the scriptures—‘So-a-ham’ which means ‘that is me’, and ‘Tattwa-masi’ which means ‘the essence is pure consciousness and it is me’. The word ‘that’ refers to Brahma which is the universal and absolute Truth and Reality about the existence, and has the qualities, inter alia, of enlightenment, of being eternal, omnipotent, universal, omnipresent, immanent, omniscient etc. When the seeker/aspirant focuses his attention on the self represented by the letter ‘Sa’ (self) and the ‘Khechhari Mudra’ (when he is unconscious of the external world and focuses his attention on the glorious supreme entity present in the center of his eyebrows), he realises the truth of the maxim ‘So-a-ham’. When he opens his eyes of wisdom, the truth of the 2nd tenet ‘Tattwa-masi’ dawns on him. Put simply, it means that the creature realises that ‘he is the same as the supreme Brahma who resides in his Atma/soul present in his bosom/heart’. At the same time, ‘the external world seen through this eye of wisdom symbolised by the presence of the divine swan in his eyes is the same Brahma who has revealed himself in this multifarious, diverse and myriad world’. This is the essential truth, or ‘Tattwa’.]”

This eclectic Mantra ‘Hans’ has been described in *Brahm Vidya Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse nos. 16, 23-24, 34, 61-64, 78-79. Let us see what it says.

“Verse no. 16 = The Jiva (i.e. the life-consciousness present inside the gross body of the living creature) involuntarily does a constant Japa of the two holy Mantras—i.e. ‘Sa’ and ‘Ha’¹. [Japa refers to the repetition of an esoteric group of letters which are called a holy Mantra. They are said to possess mystical and divine powers, and are used as a tool to focus attention and energy during meditation and contemplation. The concept of involuntary Japa has been described in verse nos. 78-79 below.]

The mystical effect of this involuntary Japa is that the Jiva (in the form of his subtle Atma or conscious life factor) moves upwards or looks upwards from the ‘Nabhi Randhra’

(literally the subtle aperture of the body represented by the navel where this life factor is supposed to live)².

This Jiva is not affected by any of the flaws and shortcomings that are inherent to this material world of sense objects³ (16).

[Note—¹When the creature breathes, the inhaled air produces a sound which is equivalent to the letter ‘Sa’ in the mouth, and the exhaled air produces the sound equivalent of the letter ‘Ha’ in the throat. The combined effect is the creature is involuntarily repeating the great Mantra ‘So-a-ham’, meaning ‘that essential and absolute Truth of creation that is known as Brahm is none but I’, or ‘the supreme Truth is my true self and it is me’. Here ‘me’ or ‘I’ refers to the soul. In other words, the creature is involuntarily, at the subtle and atomic level of his existence, recognizing and accepting the spiritual fact that he is not an ordinary component of the world but the supreme Brahm personified in his form. This is called the exalted state of self-realisation and enlightenment.

Since breathing is an automatic and involuntarily exercise done regularly and without any effort whatsoever, when the wise and enlightened aspirant understands that each breath is tantamount to repeating the eclectic Mantra ‘Hans’, he is deemed to be doing an involuntarily and unbroken Japa day in and day out. Refer Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 62-65.

The present Brahm Vidya Upanishad itself has many verses dedicated to this eclectic Mantra—e.g. verse nos. 16, 20-28, 34, 60-64, 78-79.

²The Nabhi Randhra is the virtual center of the body as the site of the navel. This is because—(a) It is through this cite that the embryo draws its nourishment when it lay in the mother’s womb, which is like saying that the lifeless clump of flesh was infused the spark of life and vitality through this hole. (b) It is here that all the Naadis or nerves in the body are said to have their center in the Nabhi Kanda, and it is from here that they radiate out to various parts of the body. (c) The navel is believed to be the center of the Nabhi Chakra, the subtle energy center which is the focus of the sun’s energy which is concentrated here. It is in this center where the sun is shining in a symbolic way in the body of the creature like it does in the sky. The point of the sky where the celestial sun is located is regarded as the navel of the Viraat Purush, the invisible, macrocosmic and all-incorporating gross body of the supreme Brahm. The navel of the individual creature occupies the same importance because the latter is regarded as an image of the Viraat Purush. The subtle form of the sun located here energises the body much like the celestial sun energises the world from its center located in the sky.

Since the creature draws its energy, vitality, strength and nourishment from the mother’s blood through the placenta attached to the navel, the latter is like the aperture of the mouth through which one draws or sucks in liquids through the bore of a straw dipped in the latter. That is why this navel is called a ‘Randhra’ which literally means a slit or opening present in the body. This is the picture at the micro level of creation in relation with the individual creature. When it is extended to the macro level, then the cosmic embryo would be the Hiranyagarbha and the subtle aperture from where it draws its nourishment and dynamic creative energy from Brahm to reveal itself in the macrocosmic gross body known as the Viraat Purush would be represented by the

celestial Sun. That is why the Sun is regarded as the cosmic center of creativity, energy, vitality and life; it is the cosmic swirling center of dynamic energy. It is like the 'navel' of the Viraat Purush much like the navel that is present in the body of the individual creature because the latter is the microcosmic visible manifestation of the former.]

“Verse no. 23-24 = Those wise ones who symbolically pour a stream of this elixir on the divine deity called Mahadeva (literally the ‘great God’ or Lord Shiva), located in the region of the navel and whose form is like a lighted lamp, while doing Japa with the Mantra ‘Hans-Hans’¹ are blessed with being free from various diseases such as the degenerating effects of old age culminating into death. [That is, such a man acquires robust health and maintains it even in his old age; he dies peacefully without having to undergo the usual torments associated with old age and death.]

He is also becomes eligible to acquire the various mystical powers called Siddhis² such as Anima etc. [That is, he acquires special powers by preserving his vital energy, stamina and vitality.] (23-24).

[Note—¹The word Hans has two components—Ha + Sa. It comes by reversing the great saying ‘So-a-Ham’ meaning ‘that essence or truth is me’. So when the self-realised man repeats this Mantra, he is in effect asserting that he has realised who he actually is. He affirms that he is not an ordinary man with the body, but that divine Being known as the Brahm who resides in his heart as the pure consciousness or Atma. The bird swan is chosen to represent him because this bird is deemed to be very pure and selective in what it accepts and what it rejects. It is known to select pearls from an assortment of gems, and drink milk and leave its water content. Similarly, the wise man is expected to pick the truth from amongst the basket of assorted charms present in this creation and leave aside the non-truths. The concept of Hans have been described elsewhere in this Upanishad also, such as verse nos. 16, 20-22, 25-28, 34, 60-64, 78-79.

²The Siddhis—The word Siddhi refers to various mystical and occult powers that a spiritual aspirant acquires as a result of certain ritualistic practices.

There are eight Siddhis which are divine mystical powers which enables the person to accomplishment astounding feats. They are the following— (i) ‘Anima’ means the power to become microscopic or so minute that one becomes invisible to the naked eye; (ii) ‘Mahima’ is to have majesty, glory and fame; to be honoured and acknowledged for one’s achievements, knowledge and skills; (iii) ‘Garima’ is to have weight, stature, dignity, decorum, gravity and significance, (iv) ‘Laghima’ is to have simplicity and humility; (v) ‘Praapti’ is to be able to attain or obtain anything wished or desired; (vi) ‘Prakramya’ is to have valour, ardour, strength, powers, prowess, potential and punch leading to triumph, glory and majesty; (vii) ‘Ishwatwa’ is to be able to have lordship or sway over others; and (viii) ‘Vashitwa’ is to be able to control and subdue others.

The Yogshikha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 1, verse no. 151-155 classifies all Siddhis into two categories—Kalpit and A-Kalpit. The Kalpit Siddhis are the ones which are created with efforts made for them using various means and methods. They have a limited scope, are perishable, and have imaginable powers and potentials that can be predicted. On the other hand, the A-Kalpit Siddhis are those

which are self-generated or uncreated by any artificial means, are natural and with unimaginable mystical potentials and powers that cannot be predicted.

Refer also to Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 46-55 and Yogtattva Upanishad, verse nos. 56-102.]

“Verse no. 34 = A wise and enlightened man who remains engrossed in repeating the eclectic and divine Mantra ‘Hans-Hans’ (i.e. ‘So-a-Ham’ meaning ‘that essence or Truth or Brahm is me’) is indeed an auspicious personification of the Trinity Gods, i.e. of Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer and protector, and Shiva the concluder. He can be successful, by the grace and blessing of his enlightened Guru, in becoming aware or realising the ubiquitous supreme Brahm who all-pervading, all-encompassing and all-incorporating (34).

“Verse no. 61 = This word ‘Hans’ is the great saying of the Vedas; it is the maxim and axiom proclaimed by the Vedas; it is the assertion of the Vedas.

This Hans is Rudra (Lord Shiva) personified, and it is the Supreme Being himself (61).

[Note—The word Hans refers to the eclectic Mantra ‘So-a-Ham, meaning ‘I am that essence’, or more elaborately ‘I, in my truthful form as the pure consciousness known as the Atma, am that essence known as Brahm’, or ‘I and Brahm are one’. Here the word ‘I’ refers to the Atma or pure consciousness. The Vedas endeavour to enlighten a person about his true ‘self’ and remove ignorance from his mental horizon. They preach the Truth of existence, about who the aspirant actually is, what is the true goal of life, how to reach it, how to get rid of miseries and problems of life and find permanent deliverance from them, how to obtain happiness and bliss that is permanent and best etc. When the spiritual aspirant discovers to his astonishment that the exalted stature that is obtainable by doing elaborate fire sacrifices and other religious rituals is easily obtainable by him by turning inwards, by meditation and contemplation that lead to him discovering his own divinity and holiness in the form of the Atma, he exults in joy and spontaneous ecstasy. He would literally dance in joy at having discovered a pitcher of eternal happiness and peace hidden inside his own bosom rather than somewhere outside.]

“Verse no. 62-63 = Amongst all the Gods, the Hans is the most exalted God called Maheshwar. Right from any point on the earth to the far reaches of the infinite directions, right from the first letter of the Sanskrit language, i.e. the letter ‘A’ (implying the beginning of creation) and extending to the last letter ‘Ksha’ (indicating conclusion of the creation, because the word ‘Ksha’ stands for decay and ruin)—it is the same Hans representing the pure consciousness, the ultimate Truth and the supreme Brahm that pervades throughout the creation represented symbolically by the alphabets of the language.

Nowhere is any Mantra (which is an esoteric and mystical group of letters or words or phrases used to worship or pay tributes to a deity) preached or nowhere does it have any meaning or even an existence if there is no Maatrika in it (62-63).

“Verse no. 64 = The magnificent splendour and the stupendous glory of this divine Hans (i.e. the pure conscious Atma or the supreme Brahm) are central to all the eclectic virtues and glories that all the honourable Gods in creation possess. This Hans occupies an exalted stature amidst the Gods and is the focal point around which all the Gods of this creation exist¹.

The aspirant should meditate in the Gyan Mudra while remembering Lord Shiva in his 'Dakshin Mukhi' form² (64).

[Note—¹That is, this divine, self-illuminated and glorious entity is seated like an Emperor surrounded by all the Gods as his attendants. This is a figure of speech to emphasise the following points—(a) All the Gods derive their powers and strengths on the authority of the supreme Brahm who is central to their existence. (b) Brahm is at the center of the entire creation much like the hub of a wheel, and all the different Gods and Goddesses represent the different attributes, virtues and qualities of Brahm. They have spread out like the branches of a tree, and if the tree is not there these branches would also not be there. (c) These Gods owe their existence, powers, strength, authority and virtues as well as their importance, value and significance to one single point source called Brahm. They revolve around this central axis just like the planets do around the sun. (d) If Brahm is the seed, the Gods are the huge colourful tree with multifarious shape and size. This is the picture at the macrocosmic level. At the micro level of creation, the creature is a representative of the cosmos, while his Atma which is pure consciousness and his 'true self' is the central point of his existence because without the Atma his existence is not feasible. The various Gods represent the different functions of the body and they therefore reside in the respective organ carrying out those functions. That is why the Hans—the aphorism for this Atma—is central to the Gods because without the Atma the body and its Gods would be meaningless.

²The Gyan Mudra in relation with the word Dakshin Mukhi refers to the sitting posture adopted by Lord Shiva while he meditated facing south. It also might mean 'with a bowed head' because the word Dakshin in Sanskrit means downward facing. In ritualistic forms of worship, this direction is the location of Yam God, the god of death whose controller is Shiva. The word Yam also means self control and self restraint. Hence, meditating with total self control and restraint over the restless organs of the body is called Gyan Mudra with a Dakshin Mukhi dimension.

An entire Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition is dedicated to this south-facing form of Shiva, and it is called 'Dakshin Murti Upanishad'.]

"Verse no. 78-79 = All spiritual aspirants who have a gross body (and of course are wise and enlightened) should constantly contemplate upon and visualise the ubiquitous presence of the supreme Lord who is faultless and immaculate, who is all-pervading, all-encompassing and omnipresent in this creation. While doing this, he should constantly repeat the divine eclectic Mantra 'Hans-Hans'. [In other words, the aspirant should constantly remind himself that he is no one else but the supreme Brahm himself personified. This is because another form of the Mantra is 'So-a-Ham', meaning 'that is me'. Refer verse nos. 16, 20-28, 34, 60-64.]

This type of Japa (repetition of the Mantra) done constantly and involuntarily is called 'A-Japa Japa', i.e. repetition of the Mantra in an involuntarily way and without being consciously aware of it being done at all¹.

This type of Japa involves a coordination of the Pran and Apaana winds. [This is because inhalation of breath during the Purak phase is known as the Pran, while the exhalation done during the Rechak phase is called Apaana.] Since a man breathes roughly twenty one thousands

time during the course of a day, this is the number of times this Mantra ‘So-a-Ham’ is automatically repeated (78-79).

[Note—¹It is called ‘A-Japa Japa’ because this repetition is done involuntarily and without any special effort or attention paid to its repetition. The practitioner is not even aware that he is repeating any Mantra because it is directly linked to the normal breathing process which is an involuntary and an automatic biological process done constantly and without break, even while a person sleeps or goes about his daily chores of life—refer verse no. 16 and its note. The prefix ‘A’ indicates negation, and therefore this repetition of the Mantra Hans is not regarded as doing a Japa in the conventional sense when special attention is focused on repeating any Mantra during some religious ritual or practicing Yoga. It is automatic and involuntary. So when the spiritual aspirant has risen to a level of awareness and enlightenment when he becomes aware of the spiritual importance of each breath that comes in and goes out of his body as representing the two limbs of the Mantra for Brahm, i.e. the letters ‘Ha’ and ‘Sa’ or the combined word ‘Hans’, he is deemed to have become Brahm-realised. Only then can he say that he is repeating the Mantra ‘So-a-Ham’ meaning ‘that Brahm is me as my true self known as the pure consciousness or Atma’.]”

The *Yogshikha Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 6, verse nos. 53-54 describes how one involuntarily repeats this Hans Mantra while he breathes. To quote these two verses—“Canto 6, verse no. 53 = These two winds, i.e. the Pran and Apaana act to pull each other in the opposite direction. That is, the Pran pulls the Apaana in the upper direction, and the Apaana pulls the Pran in the lower direction.

This is metaphorically depicted by the two letters of the Mantra ‘Hans’, viz. ‘Ha’ and ‘Sa’. In other words, the Jiva (consciousness) tries to go up and escape from the body while making the sound of the letter ‘Ha’, and then is pulled down back inside the body while making the sound ‘Sa’. (53).

“Canto 6, verse no. 54 = In this way, the Jiva (i.e. all living beings who breathe, for example a man) repeats this Mantra ‘Hans-Hans’ involuntarily while alive. But few understand its metaphysical and spiritual import. On the other hand, those ascetics who are able to grasp the great importance and significance of this eternal and imperishable divine Mantra are indeed wise, erudite, self-realised and enlightened ascetics. [Their entire life is spent in doing involuntary Japa, which is repeating of a divine Mantra and reaping its spiritual benefits, even without making any special efforts do repeat it and obtain its natural spiritual reward. Refer also to Canto 1, verse nos. 131-133; Canto 2, verse nos. 8-11; and Canto 6, verse no. 20 of the *Yogshikha Upanishad*.] (54).”

The *Varaaha Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 5, verse nos. 52, 54-55 describe the Hans Mantra besides asserting that the Atma is Hans personified—i.e. the Atma is pure, uncorrupt, wise and erudite like the divine Swan. Now let us examine what it says on the subject—

“Verse no. 52 = The practitioner also hears the subtle sound of breath coming in and going out of the nostrils, the sound that resembles the nasal sounds made by silently hissing the

two letters 'Ha' and 'Sa' of the Sanskrit alphabet. The combined effect of continuously hearing these two sounds in a cyclic manner as the practitioner exhales and inhales breath is the formation of the word 'Hans' which means 'a divine Swan'. [In other words, by continuously practicing Yoga, a stage is reached when the spiritual aspirant realises that he has obtained an exalted spiritual stature and has been successful in his endeavour of doing Yoga. This achievement is indicated by the fact that his sub-conscious mind hums and constantly reminds him that he is as pure and holy as the Swan—the 'Hans'. This word is also used as a Mantra. Refer Hansopanishad, verse no. 5-15, Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 59-63, and Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse nos. 31-35, 82-83, 93.]

From this arises the Mana (i.e. the desire and inclination of the mind to enjoy the bliss and ecstasy that comes with experiencing the pure conscious 'self' or Atma, in all its glory and magnificence, during meditation) (52).

“Verse no. 54 = The Naadis have their base or foundation in the Kanda or Pinda (literally a 'ball or egg like structure'). [Refer verse nos. 20-22.]

These Naadis are the base for the various Prans or vital winds that sustain and protect the body. [This is because if these Naadis do not carry consciousness or life-impulses to all corners of the body, the latter would die. The Pran is a word used to indicate 'life' and not death. Therefore, as long as a creature is alive, it is deemed that the Naadis have Pran flowing and pulsating in them. Refer also to verse no. 28 and 31.]

These Prans are the basis of life in all Jivas or living beings. [Pran is a synonym for the wind or air element that helps sustain life on earth. No living being would survive if there was no air on earth.]

And the Jiva is the abode for the Hans, i.e. the pure consciousness known as the immaculate and wise Atma that resides in the body of the living being called the Jiva. [The Atma is the true self of the creature, and the body is merely its habitat.] (54).

“Verse no. 55 = This Hans (the Atma; the pure consciousness) is the divine and sublime entity which provides the 'Shakti', the dynamic force, the basic energy, the vitality, the strength and the vigour that sustains and protects the entire edifice of this creation consisting of both the animate and the inanimate world. [Here the animate world refers to the creatures that have mobility, i.e. members of the entire zoological kingdom, and inanimate world is the immobile forms of life such as trees and other members of the plant kingdom.]

An ascetic should have no doubts and be free from all confusions and consternations in this regard. [This way he would be able to concentrate upon meditation and contemplation.] He should be cheerful, and practice Pranayam (breath control exercises) carefully and diligently (55).”

(c) The Mantra OM—The *Shuk Rahasya Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 20 elaborately describes how to do former worship with the Mantra OM. To quote—

“Verse no. 20 = [In this verse, the due process of invoking the Divinity by way of doing 'Shadanga Nyas'* and 'Anga Nyas'** of the Mantras is being elaborately described.]

‘OM’—this is one ‘Maha Vakya’ or the first great saying, the first maxim and axiom of the Vedas¹. The Rishi² of this Mantra is known as Hans (literally meaning a divine Swan, but used as an epithet to describe the sage who was most wise and enlightened amongst his peers so much so that he selected this monosyllable Mantra from amongst the numerous group of words and syllables available to holistically describe that entity which is supreme and transcendental Truth in creation). The Chanda³ is Gayatri⁴; the Devta⁵ is Paramhans (the supremely enlightened Divinity); the Beej⁶ is ‘Hum’ or ‘Hung’ (pronounced as sum, or sung); the Shakti⁷ is ‘Saha’; and the Kilak⁸ is ‘So-a-ham’ (i.e. ‘that is me’, implying that the aspirant who has understood the real essence of this Mantra and its spiritual import exults in the ecstasy of self-realisation when he realises that he is the entity to which this Mantra OM is referring, and it is the supreme Truth known the transcendental Brahm).

In order to successfully obtain access to the supreme transcendental Being who is the patron deity of this great Mantra (OM), the deity known as and honoured by the epithet ‘Paramhans’, I am now describing the process by which this Mantra should be invoked in a ritualistic manner so that desired mystical results are obtained, a process called ‘Viniyog’ (literally meaning a humble and prayerful invocation of the patron God and establishing a union between the individual aspirant and this Divinity).

The aspirant should first touch the thumb (with the closed fingers) and say with firm conviction and faith ‘I most reverentially and devotedly invoke Brahm who is eternally truthful, an embodiment of Gyan (truthful knowledge and enlightenment), and without an end. I invoke him and establish him in my thumb along with his astounding divine powers and stupendous potentials. Namaha⁹.’

Next, he should touch the first finger with the thumb and say with firm conviction and faith ‘I most reverentially and devotedly invoke Brahm who is an embodiment of eternal bliss and felicity. I invoke him and establish him in my first finger along with his astounding divine powers and stupendous potentials. Swaha¹⁰.’ [The use of the word ‘Swaha’ indicates that the aspirant is mentally performing a fire sacrifice.]

The second finger is next touched by the thumb and the following statement is said with firm conviction and faith ‘I most reverentially and devotedly invoke Brahm who is eternally and perpetually blissful and full of felicity. I invoke him and establish him in my second finger along with his astounding divine powers and stupendous potentials. Vaushat¹¹.’

Next, the third finger is touched by the thumb and the following statement is said with firm conviction and faith ‘I most reverentially and devotedly invoke Brahm who is honoured by the title of ‘Bhuma¹². I invoke him and establish him in my third finger along with his astounding divine powers and stupendous potentials. Hum¹³.’

The fourth finger is touched next by the thumb and the following statement is said with firm conviction and faith ‘I most reverentially and devotedly invoke Brahm who is even the Lord of this Bhuma. [Here the reference is made to the supreme transcendental Brahm, the Supreme Being who is the Lord of all that exists and from whom even the Viraat Purush, the

Bhuma, has emerged or evolved.] I invoke him and establish him in my fourth finger along with his astounding divine powers and potentials. Vaushat.'

The palm and the opposite side of it should then be touched by the opposite hand and the following statement is said with firm conviction and faith 'I most reverentially and devotedly invoke Brahm who is one and non-dual, who is unique and without a second. I invoke him and establish him in my palms and hand along with his astounding divine powers and stupendous potentials. Phat¹⁴.'

Next, the heart should be touched and the following statement is said with firm conviction and faith 'I most reverentially and devotedly invoke Brahm who is Satya (the truthful Being; the personification of Truth), an embodiment of Gyan (knowledge and enlightenment), and Anant (without an end). I invoke him and establish him in my heart along with his astounding divine powers and stupendous potentials. Namaha.'

Next, the head should be touched and the following statement is said with firm conviction and faith 'I most reverentially and devotedly invoke Brahm who is an embodiment of eternal beatitude and felicity. I invoke him and establish him in my head along with his astounding divine powers and potentials. Swaha.'

Next, the 'Shikha' (the tuft of hair on the top of the head on the crest of the cranium) should be touched and the following statement is said with firm conviction and faith 'I most reverentially and devotedly invoke Brahm who is an embodiment of eternal beatitude and felicity. Brahm is perpetually and infinitely blissful. I invoke him and establish him in my Shikha along with his astounding divine powers and stupendous potentials. Vaushat.'

Next, the two shoulders should be touched and the following statement is said with firm conviction and faith 'I most reverentially and devotedly invoke Brahm who is honoured by the epithet of 'Bhuma' (one who is vast and colossus; the Viraat Purush) and revered as such. Hum.'

Next, the two eyes should be touched and the following statement is said with firm conviction and faith 'I most reverentially and devotedly invoke Brahm who is honoured and revered as the Lord of the one who is known as 'Bhuma' (i.e. the supreme transcendental Brahm). Vaushat.'

Next, the right hand should be raised and moved in the air above the head in a circle, brought down and a light clap is made by striking it against the left palm. While doing so, the following statement is said with firm conviction and faith 'I most reverentially and devotedly invoke Brahm who is one of his kind and non-dual. He is unique and matchless in this creation. Let him protect me like a shield around my body. Phat.'

Let this supreme transcendental and almighty Brahm protect me from all the directions represented by the words 'Bhu' meaning the terrestrial world and the mortal creatures living in it, 'Bhurvaha' meaning the sky in which the creatures that fly live, and the 'Swaha' meaning the upper heavens where the Stars and the Gods reside.

This last invocation also refers to the aspirant's acknowledgement of the fact that the supreme Brahm is present in all the three aspects of creation—the mortal gross world

represented by the earth (Bhu), the subtle but visible world represented by the sky (Bhuvaha), and the subtlest and invisible world represented by the heavens (Swaha).’ (20).

[Note—*The concept of Shadang Nyas in the context of Vedic hymns or Mantras refer to the six limbs or basic divisions into which any given classical phrase, such as the Mantra, is broken or divided into for the purpose of study. These six divisions are the Rishi of the Mantra, i.e. the sage who had first visualised it in his mind and proved its efficacy, the Chanda which the classical style in which it is composed, the Devta or deity to whom it is dedicated, the Beej, literally the seed or syllable which is the basic sound form from which the Mantra has sprouted much like a tall tree having its origin in the humble ‘seed’, the Shakti or the divine and holy powers that the particular Mantra possesses, and the Kilak or the peg which helps it to be established in the body or the mystical worship instrument used during occult practices to invoke the supernatural powers of this Mantra.

** Anga Nyas is the process of ritual worship by which certain fixed points in the body are designated where the chosen deity is mentally invoked through the specific Mantra. This envisions that the mystical divine powers of the patron God or deity being worshipped by the Mantra are mentally invested in these fixed cardinal points of the body, thereby empowering the aspirant with their stupendous potentials as well as symbolically assigning the body to the tutelary God or deity to whom the particular Mantra belongs for his protection and blessing. Usually these six cardinal points are the following—the two legs, two hands, one head and one waist region. But according to this verse, they are the thumb, the tip of the fingers, the heart, the shoulders, the tuft on the top of the head, and the palm of the hand. There are prescribed ways of invoking the Mantras, and when done in a proper way it empowers the ordinary body of the worshipper with extraordinary divine and mystical powers.

Therefore, process of doing Anga Nyas is to symbolically establish the Mantra’s divine mystical powers in the worshipper’s own body and make it holy, auspicious, sanctified and empowered. The deity being worshipped is symbolically requested to come and take his seat in the body, thereby ensuring that the worshipper is getting constant protection from this godhead. In the present context, since the Maha Vakyas speak of the supreme transcendental Brahm, the latter’s invocation and seating in the worshipper’s body would ensure that he becomes a versatile personification of Brahm. He is literally transformed from being an ordinary human being to an exalted being who is as revered and honourable as Brahm as well as a living embodiment of Brahm. Herein lies the importance of having firm faith in these Maha Vakyas because assuming the mantle of Brahm is not an easy task. The worshipper is expected to live up to his responsibilities as Brahm personified!

¹The concept of OM has been elaborately described in a separate appendix of this volume.

²The Rishi of the Mantra is the sage who had first conceived or visualised it in his mind and proved its efficacy, and who is remembered first in order to pay homage to his memory and seek his blessings.

³The Chanda is the classical style in which a particular hymn or great saying is composed.

⁴The Gayatri is a special type of poetical composition having twenty four letters or syllables divided into three lines or steps or stanzas.

⁵The Devta or God is the patron deity to whom the particular Mantra is dedicated.

⁶The Beej, literally the seed, is the syllable which is the basic sound-form from which the Mantra has sprouted much like a tall tree having its origin in the humble 'seed'.

⁷The Shakti is the divine and holy powers that the particular Mantra possesses. It refers to the Mantra's dynamic energy that is subtly present in it in a coded form. Proper use of the Mantra helps to de-code this energy and unleash or activate it.

⁸The Kilak is the peg which helps a Mantra to be established in the body of the worshipper of that Mantra, or to the mystical worship instrument used during occult practices to invoke the supernatural powers of this Mantra and invest this instrument with these divine and mystical powers. It is like a nail to fix the Mantra at the designated point in the body.

⁹The word Namaha is used as a submissive word used to show supplication, great honour and respect to the deity adored by the worshipper. It literally means 'I most reverentially and devotedly bow to you.'

¹⁰The word Swaha is pronounced at the time of offering oblations to the holy fire during a fire sacrifice. It is said that when this word is said, the Fire God accepts the offering on behalf of the patron God for whom it is meant.

¹¹The word Vaushat refers to the symbolic second leg on which the formal fire sacrifice is based, the other leg being Swaha. Thus, they are often used to mean the same thing, and refer to the oblation offered to the patron deity or God who is being worshipped by the means of the fire sacrifice (Taittiriye Sanghita 7/5/5/3). That is why Vaushat is also related to the Vaishwanar Agni (the all-pervading subtle fire element in the cosmos) (Maitrayani Brahman, 4/6/7) and the Sun God (Shatpath Brahman, 1/7/2/11).

¹²The word Bhuma literally means the one who is vast and colossus as the visible world of which he is the undisputed Lord. It refers to the Viraat Purush who is the cosmic gross body of the Supreme Being known as Brahm, and from whom the rest of the visible creation has evolved.

¹³The word Hum refers to the sanctified food that is kept aside during a formal fire sacrifice and is meant for human consumption as sanctified food. In ancient times, householders used to keep aside some food, equivalent in quantity to sixteen eggs of the peacock, to be offered to guests or mendicants. This formed the symbolic third leg of the formal fire sacrifice.

¹⁴The word Phat refers to the sound of clap made by striking the two palms together. It is one of the practices observed during formal occult worship.]”

(d) The eclectic Mantra *Rudra-Rudra*—This is the Mantra dedicated to Lord Rudra who is one of the eleven divine forms of Lord Shiva. It is described in Rudra Hridaya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, verse no. 16. It is so powerful and grand that it is said to incorporate all the Mantras of the not only the other two Gods of the Trinity, viz. Vishnu and Brahma, but all other Gods combined. To quote this Upanishad—”Therefore, a wise and enlightened man who repeats the great Mantra ‘Rudra Rudra’ and remembers the great Lord

is symbolically worshipping all the Gods and repeating their Mantras. This helps him to overcome the evil effects of all sins and misdeeds (16).

[Note—In the view of what has been expounded in this Upanishad, the Mantra ‘Rudra-Rudra’ would deem to include the divine Mantras of all the Gods of the Trinity—i.e. Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. Much like OM which is the universal Mantra for the supreme transcendental Brahm, this Mantra ‘Rudra-Rudra’ is the universal Mantra for all the Gods combined.]”

Lord Shiva’s divine Mantra has been described in *Panch Brahm Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, verse no. 30 as follows—”Lord Shambhu (Shiva) has a Mantra of five syllables¹, and he is a personification of the transcendental supreme Brahm. This Mantra has the Sanskrit alphabet ‘Na’ in the beginning and the letter ‘Ye’ at the end. This Mantra should be repeated to please and worship the supreme transcendental Divinity known as Brahm (30).

[Note—¹The five syllable Mantra of Shiva is ‘Namaha Shivaye’ = Na + Maha + Shi + Va + Ye = 5. Here it implies that each of these syllables stands for one or the other five aspects of creation that the Panch Brahm represents. The Mantra means ‘I bow most reverentially to Lord Shiva’.]

(e) The Mantra *for worshipping food as a bearer of Pran of the vital life forces of creation*—The Pran Agnihotra Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 2 enunciates the Mantra for sanctifying food offered to the Lord as follows—

“The food that is to be worshipped, honoured and consecrated should be respectfully placed on the altar erected on the ground for the purpose of this worship, and the following three Mantras and two Richas should be said.

(a) The three Mantras are the following—‘Ya Aushadhi’, ‘Ya Phalinirya’ and ‘Jivalaa Naghaarishaam’. [These Mantras are given below in verse nos. 3-5.]

(b) The two Richas (a hymn or incantation of the Vedas) are the following—‘Anna-pateya-annasya’ and ‘Ydanna-magnir-bahuda’. [These Richas are given in verse nos. 6-7 below.] (2).

[Note—The food is honoured and shown great respect because it harbours life inside it in a latent form. It is the food that creates the outer sheath of the body, called the Anna Maye Kosh, the food sheath, without which the Atma, the pure conscious ‘self’ of the creature, would have no abode to live in this physical world. Food has the eclectic virtue of being able to first infuse life into an otherwise lifeless gross body, and then sustain, nourish and protect it. It is not the gross aspects of the food that is being honoured here but its inherent subtle and sublime quality of sustaining life that is worthy of respect, because this grand virtue elevates food to the level of Brahm, the eternal source of life and its sustenance. This aspect of food makes it equivalent to the Atma because both sustain life in a gross and fundamentally lifeless body. In this context, the basic life-infusing and life-sustaining virtues of food that are latently present in it in a hidden form are identical to the pure conscious Atma that also lies hidden from view inside the external gross form of the body. Even as a body sans the Atma is worthless, any food

which does not have nutritional value is equally worthless. It is the divine power of the food eaten to foster life that is important rather than its external gross form or features because the latter is excreted as stool after the vital forces of life and the life-energy trapped inside the food have been extracted by the creature when he eats that food to sustain his 'self'.

When a man eats food with the holistic approach of doing a fire sacrifice, he is actually offering each morsel of food eaten as an offering to the Supreme Being residing inside his body as his Atma much like the offerings made to a formal sacred fire during fire sacrifices. During such fire sacrifices, all the food offered to the fire pit are meant for the deity to be worshipped and the fire is only a means of transferring this offering to the deity. In the case of internal fire sacrifice as espoused in the present Upanishad, the food is offered to the Pran, the vital life sustaining forces of life representing Brahm that are present inside the body. This Pran thus becomes the worshipped deity. But even as all Gods and deities are shown due respect as representatives of the Supreme Being known as Brahm, and not for their own sake par-se, this Pran is worshipped on behalf of the Atma, the pure consciousness residing inside the body as Brahm personified. So, the ultimate Authority that is worshipped is the Atma, and the medium of doing this is the Pran. Therefore, the Pran is also offered as an offering during this symbolic fire sacrifice—thereby giving this Upanishad its name 'Pran Agnihotra'.

Since the food that is eaten is not to satisfy one's hunger or gratify the senses of taste and pleasure but is a holy offering to the deity, it is first cleaned and duly consecrated by saying of Mantras as done during formal forms of fire sacrifices.]”

(f) The eclectic *Mantra of Lord Ram*, viz. 'Raang/Raam', along with its magnificent and grand spiritual importance, has been elaborately described in *Ram Rahasya Upanishad* of Atharva Veda tradition in its Canto 5. Now, let us examine some of its relevant verses here.

"Verse no. 4 = Therefore, the letter 'Ra' symbolises the self-illuminated, unequivocally truthful and eternally blissful supreme transcendental Soul of creation which is also the Lord of creation called the 'Parmatma'. This divine entity is an image of 'Sat-Chit-Anand'—i.e. it is truthful (Sat), it is consciousness (Chit), and it is blissful (Anand).

This Parmatma is Brahm, the divine cosmic entity which is honoured by the epithet 'Niranjan', i.e. one who is absolutely faultless, immaculate and pristine pure.

When the long vowel sound 'Aa' (pronounced as in rather, father, barber) is added to this basic alphabet 'Ra' (as described in verse no. 3 and standing for the Fire), the resultant letter is 'Raa' (pronounced as in rather). It then stands for Pran and Maya—the magnificent virtues of the Parmatma which enabled the latter to infuse life into the otherwise lifeless world, and create necessary delusions so that the inhabitants of this creation would remain perpetually involved in its sustenance, development and growth, and also to ensure that the wheel of creation set in motion by the Parmatma (the Supreme Being, the supreme Brahm) would continue to go round and round on its own till the time the Lord decides to stop its rotation.

Brahm, the Parmatma, is the one who injected 'Pran' (life) into this creation, and this is symbolized by the long vowel sound of 'Aa' because when we pronounce any word with this

sound, the mouth has to be open wide which is an indication of vibrant, dynamic and energetic forms of life.

Similarly, Brahm is the one who created Maya or the numerous delusions that are the hallmarks of this artificial world. In fact, without the interference of delusion-creating powers of Brahm, the creature would not remain involved in this world inspite of being aware of its impermanent and miserable quotient.

It ought to be noted here, and this is a very important observation, that no consonant has any sound of its own without the interjection or infusion of the vowel sound in it. Therefore, this world represented by the pure consonant 'Ra' (pronounced as in goiter, guitar) would be lifeless and meaningless like the conclusion of creation (as indicated when these two English words are pronounced, and no sound lingers after that and the mouth closes), and not representing a vibrant, energetic, dynamic and chirpy world as it is known today had it not been injected with the long vowel sound 'Aa' (as in rather, father, barber) when the mouth is wide open to indicate signs of active and vibrant life (4).

"Verse no. 5 = It is the conjunction of the consonant 'Ra' with the long vowel sound of 'Aa' that has created Pran or the vital factors of life in all their vibrant forms and dynamism in this world. [In other words, the dormant fire element represented by the alphabet 'Ra' is made to leap up and become active when it is injected with life represented by the vowel 'Aa'.]

This transformation of the simple letter 'Ra' into a symbol of life, dynamism, vibrancy and vitality is achieved by using the basic or fundamental sound of this consonant 'Ra', which is the half-syllable called 'Refa' in the Sanskrit language and it is depicted as a coma placed on the top of the following alphabet, making it sound as in 'whirr' or 'purr', followed by the long vowel sound of 'Aa' which is added to the resultant letter (as in rather).

Since the 'Refa' symbolizes the fire element because it is a half-syllable representing the consonant 'Ra' which in turn is the Beej Mantra of the fire element, it is deemed to be as brilliant and glowing as the fire element and its patron deity the Fire God. In other words, the 'Refa' stands for the supreme Brahm or pure cosmic Consciousness which is secretly present in the entire creation as its vital forces of life and energy as represented by the latent fire element as well as the vital winds called the Pran present universally in all forms of life in this world. Nothing is imaginable without Brahm—i.e. nothing can survive without the presence of the 'fire element', the 'life forces called the Pran' and the 'Atma or pure consciousness' which represents the Parmatma.

[Each consonant of the language symbolizes one or the other aspect of creation, this statement means that it is Brahm in the form of the universal essential spark of life represented by the 'fire element' as well as the Pran and Maya Shakti that are also universal symbols of life and creation which is at the core of all that exists in this world. Without Brahm and its dynamism, nothing would exist and have a meaning. Since meaningful words are formed from these basic alphabets of the language, it also implies that anything worthwhile must have Brahm present in it. That is why Brahm is called the universal Truth and one factor that unites the entire creation and threads it into one single garland. Again, since letters would have no meaning if no words

are formed from them, it also follows that the mere presence of Brahm or consciousness would not be sufficient to create and infuse colourful life in this creation. Towards this end, Brahm needs to have the support of 'Maya'—the maverick power of creating delusions that Brahm possesses, besides taking the assistance of the vital winds called 'Pran' which inject life, strength, vigour and vitality into the gross world.] (5).

"Verse no. 6 = The consonant 'Ma' (as in mother) symbolises development, progress, rising, increment, evolvment and enhancement. [This is because when we pronounce this alphabet, the mouth has to be opened, symbolizing awakening after sleep, or the rising of a new dawn in the cosmic horizon in the context of Brahm.]

It also symbolizes 'Maya' because it was Maya or the delusion creating power of the supreme Brahm that enabled him to expand this creation and ensure that it became self-perpetuating. Hence, it is said that this letter 'Ma' is the Beej Mantra for Maya; it is the basis of Maya. Therefore, 'Ma' also represents Brahm in the latter's aspect of creating Maya or delusions. In other words, the letter 'Ma' represents Brahm's stupendous cosmic power to create delusions on the one hand, and to expand, develop and enhance the creation created by him on the other hand (6).

"Verse no. 7 = The Beej Mantra 'Raam(g)/Raam' is for Lord Ram. This Beej Mantra is formed by placing a dot "̣" on the letter 'Raa' (i.e. by placing a dot on the basic consonant 'Ra' with an added vowel sound of 'Aa'.]

This 'dot' is a symbol of 'Maya Shakti' (refer verse no. 6 of this Canto 5 above) because it is pronounced like the alphabet 'Ma' in its basic, silent form (as in the English alphabet 'M'—because the mouth is closed after one has finished pronouncing this alphabet). Therefore, when this 'dot' is placed on the letter 'Raa' symbolizing Lord Ram, the resultant pronunciation would be something like 'Raam' (which would combine the two letters Raa as in rather, and Ma as in the English alphabet m).

This is why the supreme Brahm, when associated with Maya Shakti in its incarnation of Sita, is called Lord 'Ram' ('Raa + Ma').

Lord Ram is therefore the 'Purush', or the Male form of Brahm, when the latter is associated with Maya in its incarnation as Sita, the divine consort of Lord Ram. [This also refers to the fact that Lord Ram is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, the Viraat Purush who is the all-pervading and all-encompassing macrocosmic form of Brahm. The divine consort of Vishnu is Laxmi, the goddess of wealth and worldly pomp and prosperity that is a symbol of Maya.]

The 'Purush' is a manifestation of the combined majesty of the three divine aspects of creation—viz. 'Shiva' representing the beauty of eternal truth, auspiciousness and holiness, 'Surya' or the celestial Sun representing eternal source of light, illumination, energy, dynamism and the eternal fire element, and 'Indu' or the celestial Moon representing calmness and the soothing elixir of life called Amrit, the ambrosia of eternity and bliss that is supposed to be stored in it.

In the Beej Mantra 'Ra(g)/Raam' pertaining to Lord Ram, the basic consonant 'Ra' stands for the brilliant flame of the fire element, the 'dot' on top stands for 'Naad' (the cosmic ethereal sound that fills the sky, and which is heard as the Mantra 'OM'), and the vowel sound of 'Aa' symbolizing the Maya Shakti or the power of the supreme Brahm to create illusions of reality (7).

"Verse no. 8 = The complete word 'Raam' (or 'Ram') stands for the two aspects of the supreme Brahm at once. These two aspects of Brahm are the Purush and the Prakriti.

[The 'Purush' is the primordial Male aspect of creation, the provider of the vital spark of life in the form of the cosmic 'sperm' represented by the 'consciousness', 'the fire element' and 'the Pran or the vital winds' that infused life into this creation. The 'Prakriti' is the cosmic female aspect of creation and it represents Brahm's dynamism and creative energy. In other words, the first part of the Mantra 'Raam', i.e. the letter 'Raa' (pronounced as in rather), stands for the Viraat Purush who is a macrocosmic manifestation of the supreme Brahm, and whose incarnation is Lord Ram. The second part, i.e. the letter 'Ma' (pronounced as the in mum, rum, come etc.) stands for Prakriti which is Brahm's creative dynamism revealed in the form of cosmic Nature. Hence, the word 'Ram' combines the grand and magnificent virtues of both these two cosmic entities—the Viraat Purush and Prakriti. Therefore, the combined word 'Raam or Ram' stands for the union between Brahm representing the primordial Male aspect of creation and revealed in the form of the Viraat Purush, and the Maya Shakti of Brahm revealed in the form of the Prakriti or Nature. This union results in the creation of the visible world even as a union of a man and a woman creates a child. It is the child that carries the name and genes of the parent to the next generation, otherwise the cycle snaps then and there.]

Since the male provides the sperm which acts as the 'nucleus' of life, the Purush is represented by the 'dot' or the Bindu (because the dot is a symbolic representation of the sperm). The fertilized egg is implanted in the womb of the mother, the female aspect of creation. The latter is represented by the 'Naad' or the crescent-shaped crucible placed below the Bindu. That is why 'Prakriti' or Nature is honoured with the title of 'cosmic Mother' as it is the one that nourishes and sustains the creation initiated by the Purush or the supreme Brahm. [It also refers to the practical aspect of creation wherein the male sperm is planted in the womb of the female which acts as the cup or a crucible that first receives this sperm, and then nourishes the fertilized egg that lodges there after the sperm has finished its job.]

The Beej Mantra of Lord Ram is adorned by a 'Chandra-Bindu' on its top. This 'Chandra-Bindu' consists of a Bindu (a dot) placed strategically above a concave crucible shaped like a crescent Moon at its focal point. The concave surface below the Bindu or the 'dot' is also called a 'Naad'. [The word 'Naad' literally means a big vessel shaped like a shallow plate or saucer. In the field of metaphysics, the 'Naad' is the cosmic vibration produced in ether which create the sound encapsulated in the ethereal Mantra OM. It is a sound and subtlest manifestation of the cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm or Pranav.]

The Bindu (dot) and the Naad (the crescent-shaped sign placed below the dot) are collectively called the 'Chandra-Bindu'¹. It is placed on the letter 'Raa' to form the Beej Mantra of Lord Ram—viz. 'Raam or Raang'.

The letter 'Raa' with the Bindu or dot on top represents the Beej Mantra for the Fire, while the crescent-shaped sign of the moon placed below the Bindu or dot represents the virtues of the Moon. This latter sign represents the various Kalaas of the Moon, and it symbolizes the different aspects of creation that constantly change but do not affect the primary nature of things². [Refer verse no. 9 also.](8).

[Note—¹According to Sharda Tilak, 1/809, the dot represents the Purush, and the Beej Mantra 'Raang' is the Shakti aspect of creation. It is their union that produces the Naad, the cosmic vibrations of sound.

²The word Kalaa means aspect or form of anything. The changing face of the moon is indicative of the ever-changing nature of the world. But inspite of these apparent changes in the visible shape of the moon—which are actually visual illusions created because the moon is observed from different angles from the surface of the earth as it moves around it, and therefore its illuminated surface appears to increase or decrease in size and shape over a period of one month during which it completes one full circle of the earth—the actual structure of the moon does not change at all. Similarly, the Viraat Purush had displayed so many varying qualities and attributes, most of them quite mundane and worldly in nature, even contradictory to each other and at odds to the generally held grand perception of the Supreme Being, in his incarnation as Lord Ram, but all these variations and diversities in his role as a human being do not change the fundamental fact that Lord Ram is the supreme and divine Brahm who is Advaitya or non-dual by nature on the one hand, and that he represents the fundamental elements of creation that are eternal and universal.

Another interesting fact is that the moon is said to have 'sixteen Kalaas' which represent the sixteen faces of the moon as observed on different nights of its dark and bright fortnights. These sixteen Kalaas are the basic grand virtues that make a man noble and great. In other words, by placing the crescent moon on the Beej Mantra of Lord Ram it is meant to signify that the Lord is crowned by or anointed with all these sixteen grand virtues and noble character traits that are expected from a highly exalted and honorable man.

The sixteen Kalaas or aspects or facets of creation have been expressly listed in the Prashna Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Canto 6, verse no. 4. These sixteen Kalaas are the following—(i) Pran (life; life consciousness; the very essence of creation; the vibrations of life manifested in the form of the vital winds; the rhythm and essential functions pertaining to life), (ii) Shraddha (the eclectic virtues of faith, believe, conviction, reverence, respect, devotion), (iii) Akash (the all-pervading, all-encompassing sky or space element), (iv) Vayu (wind, air element), (v) Tej (energy, splendour, radiance, glory, might, majesty and fire element), (vi) Apaha (water element which is the all-important ingredient for life), (vii) 'Prithivi' (earth element which is the base or foundation for all mortal creation), (viii) Indriya (the organs of the body, both the organs of perception as well as of action), (ix) Mana (the mind and heart complex and their stupendous

potentials), (x) Anna (food, the element without which life is simply not imaginable because it provides it with the basic nourishment and energy), (xi) Virya (semen, sperms, standing for courage, valour, potency, vitality and prowess), (xii) Tapa (austerity and penance, tolerance of hardship as a means of penitence, forbearance as well as carrying out strict religious vows in order to purify one's self; the sufferance for some auspicious and noble cause) (xiii) Mantra (the key or formula to achieve success in any enterprise; it also refers to the ability to give good advise; the power to contemplate and think, concentrate and focus, and then logically arrive at a conclusion; the different mystical formulas consisting of letters or words or phrases which encapsulated various dynamic forces of Nature which could be invoked and harnessed by the creature and help him to utilise the latent cosmic energy, strength and other magnificent powers incorporated in these Mantras for the benefit of creation at large), (xiv) Karma (the ability to do deeds and take action; the strength, energy and stamina to perform even difficult tasks), (xv) Loka (the various worlds, such as the mortal world where the creature lived on the earth, the lower heaven called the Antariksha where the junior Gods and the Spirits of dead creatures would live, and the upper heaven or Brahm Loka where the Supreme Being lives; the different worlds as experienced during the waking state, the dreaming state and the deep sleep states of existence of the consciousness), and (xvi) Naam (the name assigned to each independent creature; the good name, fame, reputation, honour and glory that a creature has in this world).

When we refer to the man, the Sanskrit word for him is Purush. Now, this word Purush refers to someone who resides in a 'Pur'—a city. [Refer—(a) Krishna Yajur Veda's Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 72, 165; Canto 5, verse no. 2. (b) Atharva Veda's Prashna Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 3.] In the Upanishads, this city is the human body, and the resident is the 'Atma' which is the all-pervading and cosmic Consciousness called the supreme Brahm residing inside the individual body of the creature as his 'true self', as his true identity. [Refer—Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, Canto 2, Brahman 5, verse no. 18.]

Now, this man who is being addressed as the 'Purush' is no ordinary human. In order to be rightly called a Purush he must have become pure and cleansed of all sins and evils. [Refer—Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, Canto 1, Brahman 4, verse no. 1.] Therefore, the 'Purush' is the Supreme Being (Brahm) residing in the body of the individual creature as his pure conscious Atma, the entity that is free from all contaminations, corruptions and blemishes. So, in the enlightened view of the Upanishads, the Purush when referred to the 'man' is not his physical body but the Atma.

These sixteen elements or units created by the Supreme Being are the sixteen Kalaas or aspects or fractions of creation. In other words, this visible creation is made up of these sixteen units in different ratios just like a colourful picture in mosaic is prepared by an expert artisan from bits and pieces of glass or stone which are independent units in their own right but when incorporated in the mosaic that forms the colourful picture they become an inseparable and an integral part of the latter. Even if one piece is removed, the picture is disturbed.

In simple terms it means that a person's total composite personality, his characteristic attributes and individuality, his vitality and stamina, his prowess, powers and strength, his drive and vigour et al can be divided into sixteen parts.

The Kalisantarna Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 2 says that these sixteen Kalaas are like sheaths or veils covering the Atma or 'self' of the man, and he can realise this glorious divinity residing in his bosom only when these Kalaas which are like impediments or hurdles in self and Brahm realisation are removed. When this Upanishad describes them as 'hurdles or impediments' in realising the glory of the 'self' it implies that although all these sixteen qualities are related to achieving glory and majesty in the world, they have nothing to do with 'self-realisation' and 'Brahm-realisation' which is possible only by abandoning everything related to this world as well as the body both in its gross part and its subtle part.

The Prashna Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 6, verse no. 2 says that the divine entity that exhibits sixteen divine attributes lives in the body itself.

The Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, Canto 1, Brahman 5, verse nos. 14-15 describes the sixteen Kalaas of Prajapati (the Lord of creation/world) in a symbolic manner by alluding to the phases of the moon. The fifteen nights of the dark or the bright phases of the moon when the disc of the moon continuously changes + one fundamental truth of the moon which is its disc that never changes inspite of its view from the earth that constantly changes.]

"Verse no. 9 = The Beej Mantra of Lord Ram, which is 'Ra(g)/Raam' (i.e. the alphabet 'Ra' with a long vowel sound of 'Aa' added to it and having a 'dot' or a Chandra Bindu on top as described in the previous verses) is a representative of a combined form of the Fire and the Moon. [The fire in all its splendour and majestic form is represented by the letter 'Raa', while the Moon is represented by the Chandra Bindu on to the top.]

In other words, the combined virtues of the fire element called the 'Agni', as well as the essence of bliss and life in the creation represented by the moon called the 'Chandra', are simultanously present in a subtle form in the Beej Mantra of Lord Ram, i.e. in 'Ra(g)/Raam', much like the case of the presence of the huge banyan tree in its seed which conceals this tree inside its self in a most secret, subtle and imperceptible form (9).

[Note—This Beej Mantra 'Ra(g)/Raam' having both the signs of the Fire and the Moon at one place symbolizes that Lord Ram represents in his divine form the combined glories and magnicence of both the Fire and the Moon. The fire element stands for dynamism, energy, vitality, vigour, strength and powers, the virtues of purity and the ability to purify any other thing which comes in contact with it, its natural illumination which is a metaphor for knowledge and wisdom, and warmth that is a symbol of life and vitality. The moon is regarded as the heavenly pitcher of Amrit, the ambrosia of eternity and bliss. As compared to the scorch of the raging fire, the rays of the moon are soothing and balm-like. On the face it appears that the Fire and the Moon cannot co-exist because one is very hot and scorching, while the other is cool and soothing. But the fact that a synergy is established between them proves that the supreme Brahm, in his visible manifestation as Lord Ram, can achieve impossible things if he so wishes.

This is why he is the 'supreme and all-powerful authority' in creation that can do un-imaginable wonders by employing his powers to create magical delusions, a power called 'Maya Shakti'. Since the entire creation is a visible and most apparent manifestation of the stupendous maverick powers of this one single Supreme Being acting in various roles, it follows that Lord Ram, for all practical purposes, combines in himself these two apparently opposite virtues of creation—he represents both the fire element as well as the moon.

It means that while on the one hand he is like the Fire, ferocious and unrelenting for the wicked and evil creatures in this world, burning them or punishing them in his fire of wrath, and on the other hand he is most compassionate, comforting and benevolent for his devotees, ameliorating their pains and agonies, destroying their sins and their bad consequences, and giving them eternal bliss and happiness that comes with accessing the elixir stored in the moon, the elixir called Amrit.]

"Verse no. 10 = The entire movable as well as the immovable world is inherently established in a subtle and imperceptible form, in the Beej Mantra 'Raam(g)/Raam' of Lord Ram.

All the virtues and dynamism that are present in the Beej Mantra are also present in the full name of Lord, i.e. in the word 'Ram' (10).

"Verse no. 11 = The first letter 'Raa' of the Lord's name 'Ram' represents the supreme transcendental Brahm free from the influences of Maya, while the second letter 'Ma' of this name symbolises Mukti or liberation and deliverance of the creature from this mundane world as well as the emancipation and salvation of his soul. This letter 'Ma' is the provider of Mukti to the sincere worshipper who adores and understands the spiritual and metaphysical importance of the name 'Ram' assigned to the supreme Brahm (11).

"Verse no. 12 = The second letter 'Ma' of Lord Ram's name 'Ram' stands for 'Maa' or the universal mother of creation. It provides the same benefits to the worshipper that the mother does to her child. Being appended to Brahm represented by the first letter 'Raa', this letter 'Ma' enables the worshipper of Lord Ram to enjoy a dual benefit—he has the benefit of enjoying the world as well as of obtaining emancipation and salvation at the same time. In other words, Lord Ram bestows his devotee two benefits—he gets to enjoy the best in this world, and at the same time he ensures his salvation upon death (12).

[Note—The universal mother in this case is Goddess Laxmi as she is the divine consort of Lord Vishnu whose incarnation Lord Ram is. Since the letter 'Raa' of the Lord's name 'Ram' stands for the supreme Brahm, this 'mother' would be Maya, the 'other half' of Brahm. Both Laxmi and Maya are the female aspects of creation, and represent the 'other half' of the Supreme Being, called Brahm as well as Lord Vishnu. The fact that Vishnu, or the Viraat Purush, and Brahm are the same Supreme Being with two names has been expounded upon in the Tripadvibhut Maha-Naryan Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 2, paragraph no. 12; Canto 8, paragraph nos. 17.

Now therefore this verse means that a wise spiritual aspirant who realises the metaphysical import of the divine name of Lord Ram and understands that he is no one else but the Supreme Being himself in this form is able to reap the benefits of this

awareness or realisation. Blessed by the Lord and his divine Shakti, he is able to enjoy great fame and honours in this world as well as all the comforts and pleasures that this world has to offer to its inhabitants while he lives in it, and upon his death he finds ultimate liberation and deliverance for himself because the Lord's Maya Shakti would not be able to create any hurdles in his path. The latter is made possible because even when he was alive and enjoying the world, he was wise enough to realise the illusionary nature of everything material, and so had just been enjoying them without getting emotionally or mentally attached or involved in anything worldly just like a spectator enjoys a magic or theatre show. This ensures that his 'true self', i.e. his soul, is free from the fetters that shackle an ordinary and non-realised man to this world and its material charms. Consequentially, no worldly attachments dog his soul or his Atma after death, and like an untethered balloon he rises and rises in his spiritual quest to ultimately find the citadel of spiritual bliss and happiness, called attainment of Moksha. This result in his being freed from all the fetters that tie an ordinary creature to this artificial and transitory world of material sense objects, a world that is full of miseries and pain—and this achievement is called his obtaining Mukti.]

"Verse no.13-14 = The first letter 'Raa' of the Lord's name 'Ram' stands for the Sanskrit word 'Tat' meaning 'that entity' which refers to the ultimate Truth of creation, which in turn is the pure conscious Atma or soul of creation called the 'Parmatma'.

On the other hand, the second letter 'Ma' of the name 'Ram' stands for the Sanskrit word 'Twam' meaning 'you' which refers to the living creature or the Jiva.

The union between these two fundamentally inseparable units of creation is indicated by the word 'Asi', meaning 'it is'. These three words, i.e. 'Tat', 'Twam' and 'Asi' form the basic tenet of the scriptures, called the 'Maha Vakya'. Hence, the completed Maha Vakya is 'Tat Twam Asi'—that essence is you; or 'that art thou'¹.

That is why those who are experts in this philosophy assert that Brahm represented by the word 'Tat', and the Jiva represented by the word 'Twam' are basically the same universal and uniform non-dual consciousness existing in two different planes, the former at the cosmic level and the latter at the individual level. The bridge between them is established by the third word 'Asi', implying 'it is certainly so'. In other words, the erudite and wise ones unequivocally declare that the individual Jiva (the living being) is no one else but the supreme Brahm, the Supreme Being, in a microcosmic form.

The word 'Namo', literally meaning 'to bow before', of the six-letter Mantra (Raam(g)/Raam Raamaaye Namaha—Raam(g)/Raam + Raa + Maa + Ye + Na + Maha = 6 letters; refer Canto 2, verse no. 16)² refers to the fact that the wise, erudite, learned, enlightened and self-realised spiritual aspirant offers his obeisance and respects to Lord Ram with this firm conviction that the Lord is none but the supreme Brahm personified, and that he is actually honouring this Brahm when he honours Lord Ram. Further, such a wise man also realises that the divinity he is offering his worship to is none but his own truthful 'self' known as the Atma which is pure consciousness and Brahm personified.

The following points are to be specially noted in this verse—(i) The first letter is the monosyllable ‘Raan(g)/Raam’ which is the Beej Mantra for Lord Ram, and it is a substitute for the ethereal Mantra ‘OM’ that is universally regarded as the Beej Mantra for Brahm which is always placed as a prefix of all hymns and Mantras to honour the supreme Brahm first before honouring the deity to whom that particular Mantra is dedicated. Refer verse no. 16 of this Canto 5 below. (ii) The second word ‘Raamaaye’ consists of three letters—viz. ‘Raa’, ‘Maa’ and ‘Ye’. The first letter ‘Raa’ refers directly to Lord Ram, the supreme Brahm revealed in his divine form, and therefore it is equivalent to the word ‘Tat’ of the Maha Vakya ‘Tat Twam Asi’ cited above. The second letter ‘Maa’ is equivalent to the English words ‘me’ or ‘I’. In other words, it refers to the fact that Brahm is ‘me’ or ‘I’. It refers to the fact that the spiritual aspirant has realised the eclectic spiritual truth that Brahm is his own ‘self’, his Atma. Hence, ‘Maa’ is equivalent to the phrase ‘Twam Asi’ of the Maha Vakya ‘Tat Twam Asi’, meaning ‘I am’ (that Brahm), or (that Brahm) ‘is me’.

By extension it means that the spiritual aspirant has become self-realised and discovered that Lord Ram resides in his own bosom as his Atma, and it would mean that the concerned person is a personified form of Lord Ram, possessing all the auspicious and divine virtues that Lord Ram is famous for. This eclectic realisation, this wisdom and awareness is true realisation, and this leads to his truthful Mukti—freedom from all fetters that ignorance of the truth represent, and which tie down a creature to this world of delusions and deceit. A man who is free from the shackle of delusions and who has realised the ‘truth’ about his ‘self’ is indeed a spiritually freed man.

The realisation of the truthfulness and personal relevance of the Maha Vakya ‘Tat Twam Asi’ fills him with extreme ecstasy and bliss of the highest order that comes with self-realisation and a discovery of a great secret. It removes his fear of death and its accompanying horrors. This happens because the ‘self’, the Atma, is eternal and imperishable; the Atma never dies like the gross body; the Atma is eternally blissful and happy. This awareness instills in him confidence about his eternal and exalted nature and stature, and enlightens him about the great truth about his real and truthful identity as being the conscious Atma that is a cosmic entity and enlightened. The ‘self’ is not that would die and suffer its horrors.

Therefore, this realisation is deemed to have given him eternal Mukti—i.e. it provides him liberation from all bondages created by ignorance of the Truth and its accompanying delusions; it provides him deliverance from all miseries and torments that are consequential to such ignorance and delusions (13-14).

[Note—¹The great Maha Vakya ‘Tat Twam Asi’ has been expounded in other Upanishads as well—refer (i) Shukla Yajur Veda’s Paingalo-panishad, Canto 3, verse no. 3 and 8; Adhyatma Upanishad, verse nos. 30-31. (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda’s Shuk Rahasaya Upanishad, verse no. 22; Avadhut Upanishad, verse no. 2; Kaivalya Upanishad, verse no. 16; Sarwasaaro-panishad, verse no. 12-14. (iii) Sam Veda’s Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 6, sections 1-16.

²This Mantra has been elaborated upon in Canto 2, verse no. 16 along with other six letter Mantras of the Lord enumerated in verse nos. 16 and 18.]

"Verse no.15 = Therefore, this divine, holy, sacred and eclectic Mantra of Lord Ram, i.e. the 'Raam(g)/Raam Raamaaye Namaha', has unique metaphysical values, and it possesses the magnificent potentials to provide the worshipper and devotee of the Lord with the dual benefits of being able to enjoy the pleasures of this world (called 'Bhog') as well as the attainment of liberation and deliverance from its fetters and obtaining emancipation and salvation for the soul (called 'Mukti').

This Mantra has a greater spiritual significance and metaphysical importance than the great saying 'Tat Twam Asi' of the Vedas (as referred to in verse nos. 13-14 above). This is because it is easy to relate to the Mantra for Lord Ram as the Lord's divine story and all his auspicious deeds are well known in the world. [This refers to the well-known epic 'Ramayana'.]

[Doing Japa (repetition) with the Lord's Mantra requires no special metaphysical knowledge, no special skills as that required to do Yoga and Dhyana (meditation and contemplation), no great efforts such as that required to focus one's attention on Brahman as the latter is an abstract and invisible entity which requires a high level of erudition and mental faculties to make it accessible, and about which even the scriptures have asserted that it is beyond the reach of the mind and words. On the other hand, doing Japa with Lord Ram's Mantra is an easy proposition; it requires no special mental abilities such as high levels of intelligence and erudition or exemplary spiritual wisdom that is required to become 'self-realised' and 'Brahm-realised'. The only requirement is to have a firm faith and complete devotion for Lord Ram.]

All living beings have equal right over this Mantra, i.e. people belonging to all classes of society, people of all denominations, of all social and spiritual stature, people of different mental abilities and varying levels of wisdom, people belonging to all the phases of life, people pursuing all sorts of vocations—in short, all living beings have a right to do Japa (repetition) with this Mantra because all have a right to ensure Mukti or liberation and deliverance of their souls. This Mantra is sufficient to provide this spiritual reward to all the living beings single-handedly without the need for them to seek the help of any other kind of Mantra of any other deity.

[In other words, any person who is wise, erudite and sagacious enough to realise the subtle meaning, the magnificent metaphysical value, the stupendous potentials and powers, and the holiness, divinity and supremacy of this sacred Mantra of Lord Ram with all its varied connotations is deemed to be 'Jivan Mukta'. A Jivan Mukta person is one who has become enlightened enough to realise the truth about his own self as well as the falsehood of the world surrounding him. He therefore does his worldly duties but remains detached from them. He realises that all that he sees is an illusion and perishable, and it makes no sense in pursuing a mirage. On the contrary, he is deemed to have tasted the nectar of eternal bliss and happiness which gives ecstasy and thrill which no material pleasure and comfort of the world can match. Such a man is deemed to have obtained liberation from the fetters that shackle an ordinary

creature to the delusions created by this entrapping world of materialistic pleasures which are illusive and temporary as well as the miseries and torments which are equally false and transient. Such a person remains engrossed in contemplation and meditation of the supreme Brahm in the form of Lord Ram, and derives immense eternal pleasure and bliss by remaining submerged in this ocean of bliss and happiness while he is still alive in this world and goes about his daily routine in a normal way. In other words, though he appears to behave normally externally, from the inside he remains detached from and indifferent to his materialistic surroundings and their inherent plethora of miseries and pains as well as pleasures and joys. On the contrary, he remains perpetually submerged in an ocean of bliss that is obtained by meditating upon Lord Ram's divine form using the medium of this Mantra (as well as other Mantras of the Lord). Once he has tested the nectar of ultimate eternal bliss and happiness that fills his heart and being with ecstasy and thrill of self-realisation, he gives a damn to the superficial, temporary and pith-less happiness derived from the sense objects of the materialistic world, as well as is unmoved by its pains and miseries because these only affect his body and not his Atma, which is pure consciousness and his actual and truthful identity.] (15).

"Verse no.16 = This six-letter Mantra of Lord Ram ('Raam(g)/Raam Raamaaye Namaha') is deemed to be equivalent to the Pranav Mantra, i.e. the ethereal monosyllabic Mantra 'OM¹'. Pranav and Brahm are synonyms.

Hence, this six-letter Mantra of Lord Ram is worthy to be honoured and employed as a tool for obtaining Moksha (spiritual liberation, deliverance, salvation and emancipation) by all those who are sincerely eager to obtain it ('Mumuksha').

All such spiritual aspirants should ensure that they do not fall prey to the alluring entrapments of this deluding artificial world and its temptations; they should renounce this world and its material attractions. Instead, they must follow the path of Sanyas² (total detachment from the world, complete renunciation, and concentrating on spiritual emancipation and salvation). This tenet is applicable to all the four classes of society and all the four phases in the life of an individual³.

This supreme Mantra of Lord Ram which is equivalent to the Mantra for Pranav, i.e. the Mantra 'OM', is the most suitable and potent one for doing Japa (repetition) and Dhyan (contemplation and meditation).

A wise, erudite and sagacious person who understands the eclectic and holistic meaning of this divine, holy and sacred Mantra of Lord Ram with all its various connotations and shades of metaphysical meaning as well as its importance and significance in one's spiritual upliftment along with its astounding ability to help the aspirant to enjoy the dual benefit of enjoying the world while he is alive and in obtaining the ultimate emancipation and salvation of the soul at the time of death, is able to become Jivan Mukta (as defined in verse no. 15 above) (16)."

The question **who should be given a Mantra** and what **its importance** is has been answered in *Yogshikha Upanishad*, Canto 2, verse nos. 2-4. Now, let us see what these verses have to say on the subject.

“Canto 2, verse no. 2 = Shiva replied to Brahma, ‘Oh Brahma, listen. What I shall tell you now is a secret and esoteric knowledge. Success in it is a long-haul process and can only be achieved by a disciple who has served his Guru (teacher) selflessly and diligently for a period of twelve years (2).

“Canto 2, verse no. 3 = This knowledge should be imparted in its entirety and in a comprehensive manner to a disciple who possesses certain auspicious and noble virtues, such as being magnanimous and generous, a disciple who is disciplined and ready to observe self-restraint, and who strictly follows the tenets of Brahmacharya in full (i.e. who observes the strict laws of celibacy and self-control of the sense organs). [These qualities should be in addition to the one mentioned in verse no. 2—i.e. to do service to one’s Guru for twelve years to indicate his earnest intentions and sincerity of purpose.]

This eclectic and esoteric knowledge cannot be taught to and accessed by one who is proud, greedy for material gains, or is lazy and indolent in any way (3).

“Canto 2, verse no. 4 = A disciple who is wise and erudite enough to understand the essence and the hidden meaning of the divine Mantra given to him by his moral preceptor at the time of his initiation into the religious fold by the latter and has thereby become enlightened and realised, it is only such a disciple who is deemed to be competent enough to actually benefit from any knowledge and wisdom sought to be acquired by study of the scriptures or by any other means. It is only he who attains success in any spiritual and religious exercise (4).

[Note—It is not enough to become a disciple of a Guru and accept a Mantra from him as a panacea for all spiritual ills. Simple repetition and mechanical process are useless unless their deep metaphysical meaning is understood and the process is done with great faith and devotion as to its efficacy and potent in providing spiritual solace, succour, emancipation and salvation. A Mantra is like a formula of mathematics, and a student who understands intelligently how it is applied can solve all the complex problems that need the application of that particular formula, while a student who has learnt it by rote just with the aim of clearing his exams would fail to do so in practical life. A disciple who grasps the intricacies of a spiritual Mantra is deemed to be enlightened himself and competent to enlighten others about it, and since he is enlightened he cannot be haughty and boastful of his achievements or misuse the various mystical powers that come to him as a result of success in Yoga. He would be humble and pious in an exemplary manner.

Another thing is that if anything is done intelligently, with correct knowledge of how to go about it and done with full understanding of the results, one would be careful to avoid pitfalls and get deflected and perplexed by numerous alternatives and charms proffered by vested interests to divert his attention from his main goal; he would remain steady and unwavering in his pursuit. His efforts bear quicker and better results with less time and energy involved. The Mantras are mystical formulae to harness the cosmic divine energy in creation according to the individual spiritual needs of a particular person much like medicines taken by a patient to overcome his specific and individual ailments. The doctor prescribes a medicine to his patient on an individual basis much like a Guru who identifies the spiritual problems of the disciple and then prescribes a particular

Mantra best suited for his individual spiritual needs. So if the patient is intelligent and wise, he would observe all the restrictions imposed by the doctor and take his medicine properly besides fine tuning his lifestyle which might have been contributing to his ailments. In other words, an intelligent disciple treats the Mantra as a holistic remedy for all his spiritual ailments and a device that can help him to obtain liberation and deliverance from this cycle of birth and death. He realises and has firm faith both on the Guru as well as on the Mantra much like a patient who is expected to have firm faith in his doctor and the medicine prescribed by him. If the disciple does not understand or know the full meaning of the Mantra and what he is supposed to be doing, he would not reap the full benefit like a student who gets a first division in college by learning the text book by heart but not understanding the subject comprehensively and intelligently, complete with its practical applications. The result would be disastrous for his career after he leaves college—what good for example a degree in engineering is if a person does not know how to tackle a mechanical emergency in a factory where he is employed on the basis of his first division marks-sheet! At the most the Mantra would give him some initial benefit and some degree of respect amongst his peers, or it might even provide him with certain mystical powers that come bundled with this Mantra, but that would be limited to worldly gains such as acclaim, a famous name, a large crowd of disciples, pomp and pageantry as an accomplished ascetic and other material benefits that comes with acquisition of mystical powers, but without benefiting his spiritual aim which after all is the main purpose of accepting a Mantra from a Guru.]”

Anga Nyas and Kar Nyas with Mantras—There are two aspects of invoking any given Mantra and sanctifying the worshipper’s body with them. They are known as (i) Anga Nyas and (ii) Kar Nyas. They are done with any Mantra using its seed or root called the ‘Beej’ of that Mantra, and are the two basic rituals of invoking the divine powers of the Mantras which are basically mystical formulas employed in religious practice, specially during occult rites and meditation of which this Khechari is a part. The word ‘Kar’ means hand, and ‘Anga’ means body, while ‘Nyas’ refers to an invocation, or vesting or assigning any entity with something, or entrusting an entity with some trust and responsibility; to deposit, repose, trust, pledge, entrust, keep, place, etc. This is a ritualistic process in which certain parts of the body are touched and certain Mantras are said. It also means the purification of the individual parts of the body and the installation of the individual letter of the invoked Mantra, complete with its full potentials, at those points. Therefore, Anga Nyas is a process of pledging utmost faith and conviction on the divine and holy Mantra’s supernatural powers and potentials by invoking it and repositing it on the various locations of the body and its vital parts, such as the limbs, the abdomen and chest, the throat and forehead etc.

In other words, the process of doing Anga Nyas is to symbolically establish the Mantra’s divine mystical powers in the worshipper’s own body and make it sinless, holy, auspicious, sanctified and empowered. The deity being worshipped is symbolically requested to come and take its seat in the body, thereby ensuring that the worshipper is not only getting constant protection from this godhead but also has been dutifully purified and made auspicious. The body is now the symbolic seat of Divinity represented by the deity, and from the metaphysical

perspective it has been now officially made the abode of Brahm as all the Gods are nothing but manifestations of Brahm, the supreme transcendental Authority of creation. With the deity firmly established in the body of the worshipper, the latter is deemed to personify all the glorious, majestic, divine and magnificent virtues exemplified by the worshipped deity.

Anga Nyas is therefore the process of ritualistic worship by which certain fixed points in the body are designated where the chosen deity is mentally invoked through the specific Mantra. This envisions that the mystical divine powers of the patron God or deity being worshipped by the Mantra are mentally invested in these fixed cardinal points of the body, thereby empowering the aspirant with their stupendous potentials as well as symbolically assigning the body to the tutelary God or deity to whom the particular Mantra belongs for his protection and blessing.

In the context of the Beej Mantras, it refers to invoking their divine cosmic dynamic powers and establishing them on various parts of the body, or assigning the patron Gods of these seed Mantras some specific part of the body so that they can establish themselves there.

Hence, doing Kar Nyas with the Beej Mantras would be to establish these symbolic Gods representing the cosmic, divine and mystical powers that are encrypted in the different Beej Mantras on the hand of the practitioner, while Anga Nyas would be to do the same on other parts of the body such as the chest, abdomen, shoulders, throat, forehead etc.]

The locations on the body where 'Anga Nyas' is done has great metaphysical significance. Usually these six cardinal points are the following—the two legs, two hands, one head and one waist region. But according to the *Shuk Rahasya Upanishad*, verse no. 20 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, they are the thumb, the tip of the fingers, the heart, the shoulders, the tuft on the top of the head, and the palm of the hand. There are prescribed ways of invoking the Mantras, and when done in a proper way it empowers the ordinary body of the worshipper with extraordinary divine and mystical powers.

The *Garud Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, verse no. 3, describes the process of 'Kar Nyas'. In this process, the various Mantras of Lord Garud are invoked while touching the different fingers with the thumb. For instance, touching the first finger with the thumb while saying the first and the second Mantra; touching the middle finger with the thumb while saying the third Mantra, touching the third finger with the thumb while saying the fourth third Mantra, and touching the little finger with the thumb while saying the fifth Mantra. Finally, the back of the two palms are touched while saying the sixth Mantra. Each time these Mantras are said, the six cardinal points of the body, such as the heart etc., should be touched by the thumb and the relevant finger. This is known as Anga Nyas. [The points are the heart, the forehead, the cranium, the eyes, the shoulders and the navel.]

Now, let us see what this Upanishad has to say—”The first Mantra is ‘OM Namō Bhagvate Angustābhyam Namaha’ . [Briefly, it means ‘I bow before Brahm (OM) and salute the Lord by touching my thumb’ .] When this Mantra is said, the worshipper should touch the thumb with the first finger in both the hands.

The second Mantra is 'Sri Maha-Garudaaye Tarjanibhyam Swaha'. [Briefly, it means 'I offer my respects and oblations, by saying 'Swaha', to the great Lord Garud by touching my thumb with the first finger'.] When this Mantra is said, the worshipper should touch the thumb with the first finger in both the hands.

The third Mantra is 'Pakshindraaye Madhyamaabhyam Vashat'. [Briefly, it means 'I offer my respects and oblations, by saying the Beej Mantra 'Vashat', to the great Lord who is the King of Birds by touching my thumb with the middle finger'.] When this Mantra is said, the worshipper should touch the thumb with the middle finger in both the hands.

The fourth Mantra is 'Sri Vishnu-Vallabhaaye Anaamikaabhyam Hum'. [Briefly, it means 'I offer my respects and oblations, by saying the Beej Mantra 'Hum', to the great Lord who is very dear to Lord Vishnu by touching my thumb with the third finger'.] When this Mantra is said, the worshipper should touch the thumb with the third finger in both the hands.

The fifth Mantra is 'Trelorkya-paripujyataaye Kanishtikaabhyam Vaushat'. [Briefly, it means 'I offer my respects and oblations, by saying the Beej Mantra 'Vaushat', to the great Lord who is worshipped, honoured and respected in the three worlds (i.e. in the terrestrial world, the heavens and the nether worlds), by touching my thumb with the fourth finger'.] When this Mantra is said, the worshipper should touch the thumb with the fourth finger in both the hands.

The sixth and the final Mantra is 'Ugra-bhyankar-kaalaanal-rupaaye Kartalkarpristabhyam Phat'. [Briefly, it means 'I offer my respects and oblations, by saying the Beej Mantra 'Phat', to the great Lord who is most ferocious, aggressive, fearsome, and like 'death' itself personified, by placing the back of both my palms against each other (by crossing my hands at the wrist-joint)'.] When this Mantra is said, the worshipper should place the back of the palms against each other by crossing the hands at the wrist-joint.

Each time these Mantras are said, the six cardinal points of the body, such as the heart etc., should be touched by the thumb and the relevant finger. This is known as 'Anga Nyas'. [The points are the heart, the forehead, the cranium, the eyes, the shoulders and the navel.] (3)."

According to *Ram Rahasya Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 2, verse no. 43, these ten locations are the following—Brahm-randhra (which is the hair-like slit on the top of the skull), the forehead, the central point of the eyebrows (where the symbolic third eye of wisdom is said to be located), the upper palate, the two earlobes, the heart, the navel and the two thighs = 10 sites.

Primarily there are six sites according to the same *Ram Rahasya Upanishad*'s verse no. 23 where the primary seed or root words, called the Beej Mantras, are invoked. They are the following—the Brahm-randhra (top of the skull), the central point of the eyebrows, the heart, the navel, and the two thighs = 6 sites.

According to its verse no. 83-85, there are five sites for doing Anga Nyas for a warrior. These are heart (left chest), forehead/central point of the eyebrows, the top of the head where the tuft of hair is located and which is the site of the Brahm-randhra, the body armour or shield,

and the arms and armaments of the aspirant warrior. This is also followed in the worship of Shakti, the divine dynamic powers of creation, such as Durga, Parvati and Saraswati (the goddess of speech, knowledge and wisdom). Refer also *Saraswati Rahasya Upanishad*, verse no. 4 of Krishna Yajur Veda.

However, the *Dattatreya Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Section 1, Canto 1, stanza no. 8 says that the Mantra of Lord Dattatreya (a form of Vishnu) are used for doing Anga Nyas on the following parts of the body—viz. the heart, the head (forehead), the cranium (top of the head), the upper part of the body including the two shoulders and the arms, and the eyes. To quote this Upanishad—”The Beej Mantra ‘Draa(m)’ is said for doing ‘Anga Nyas’ on the heart (left side of the chest).

The Beej Mantras ‘Hrim/Hrin(g) Klim/Klin(g)’ are said for doing ‘Anga Nyas’ on the head.

The Beej Mantra ‘Ehi’ is said for doing ‘Anga Nyas’ on the tuft of hair on the top of the head (cranium).

The Beej Mantra ‘Datta’ is said for doing ‘Anga Nyas’ as a protective shield, called the Kavach, on the upper part of the body, stretching from across the two shoulders right up to the navel region in the abdomen and the whole length of the two hands.

The Beej Mantra ‘Aatre’ is said for doing ‘Anga Nyas’ on the two eyes-lids.

The Beej Mantra ‘Swaha Astraaye’ is said for completing the process by offering oblations to Lord Dattatreya. It symbolically empowers the body and invigorates or recharges its natural armour (in the form of the body’s inherent stamina, strength, energy, vitality and vigour).

When successfully done, this helps the worshipper to be as empowered and divine as Lord Dattatreya himself. One must be fully acquainted with this fact along with the process and its glorious affects. [8].”

The human body is a microcosm of the cosmos, because according to the genesis of creation, the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic, all-encompassing and all-inclusive manifestation of the supreme transcendental Brahm, had metamorphosed in the shape of the human body, and therefore this body is a manifestation of the entire creation including all its Gods and all their astounding potentials.

The creation has been visualised as having three divisions which form the so-called three worlds—viz. the heavens represented by the head of the human body where the Brahm-randhra, forehead and the eyebrows are located; the terrestrial world or the earth symbolised by the heart and the navel; and the nether or lower world by the legs and the two thighs. It must be noted that the two earlobes stand for the two extreme directions of the cosmic globe. So, when the aspirant does Anga Nyas with any Mantra on these specific points, he symbolically purifies these points on his body and empowers them with the mystical and ethereal powers of the powerful forces of Nature which these Mantras embody as mystical formulas encrypting astounding dynamic energy and forces of creation. This is a perception which implies that the ethereal and mystical powers and potentials of the Mantras representing the stupendous forces

of Nature that control creation, right from its conception to its development, growth, expansion, sustenance and conclusion, are invoked and established throughout the breadth and length of this visible creation manifested in the form of the body of the aspirant. In other words, the aspirant hopes that he would be empowered with all the glorious virtues and auspicious powers and stupendous potentials and majestic authority vested in the Viraat Purush at the cosmic level.

But at the same time this visualization of the body being a manifestation of the Viraat Purush carries a load of noble responsibility with it. If the worshipper is enlightened and wise enough so as to be doing the Anga Nyas with full understanding of its metaphysical and spiritual import, then he must also realise that he is not an ordinary mortal creature who indulges in the pursuit of worldly pleasures and comforts, or who thinks that success in this material world is the ultimate goal and criterion of success in life. On the other hand, he should endeavour to live a life of exemplary sacrifice and service, devoting his time on researching the ultimate Truth of his own self as well as the rest of creation; he must endeavour to fine out the way to free himself from the endless cycle of birth and death, and ensure that he gets final emancipation and salvation in this very life itself. He must aim and find the source that would give him eternal peace and happiness as well as contentedness and bliss of fulfillment. Otherwise he would be wasting his precious time and energy in worthless and meaningless perfunctory rituals.]

The *Dakshin Murti Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse nos. 7, 9, 11-12, 14 describe the five forms of Shiva and how the five Beej Mantras dedicated to the different divine qualities that Shiva personifies are employed in doing Anga Nyas.

The *Surya Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, verse no. 1, says that the six basic vowel sounds of the Sanskrit language are used to do Shadanga Nyas when the worshipper prays to the Sun God by invoking the Mantras narrated in this particular Upanishad.

The *Shuk Rahasya Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its verse no. 20 describes how the divine Mantra OM is used for the purpose of doing Anga Nyas. It has been quoted and explained in detail under the title ‘Beej Mantras’, sub-title (c) ‘the Mantra OM’ of this appendix.

The *Ram Rahasya Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 2 describes how Anga Nyas is done with the different Mantras of Lord Ram in its various verses--e.g. verse no. 10-11, 22-23, 29, 39, 42-43, 49-51, 53, 55, 57, 61.

Doing Nyas of a Yantra (a worship instrument)—In ritualistic forms of worship such as in mystical occult practices, an instrument called a Yantra is used to offer worship to a chosen deity. The various Mantras of the deity that is to be worshipped with this instrument are invoked and established at different points on this instrument. This is called doing Nyas. This is done to symbolically establish the Mantra’s divine mystical powers in a particular point of the worship instrument. It makes that point or spot holy, auspicious, sanctified and empowered. Doing Nyas helps to purify this instrument and make it blessed. The word ‘Nyas’ refers to an invocation, or vesting or assigning any entity with something, or entrusting an entity with some trust and responsibility; to deposit, repose, trust, pledge, entrust, keep, place, etc. This is a

ritualistic process in which certain parts of the worship altar or instrument or even the body of the worshipper are touched and certain Mantras are said. Therefore, doing Nyas is a process of pledging utmost faith and conviction on the divine and holy Mantra's supernatural powers and potentials by invoking it and reposting it on the various locations of the worship instrument and its vital parts, such as its central point, its spokes and rings. It makes the worship instrument powerful and effective as it now becomes energized with the dynamic powers of the deity to which this worship instrument is dedicated.

The Melan Mantra— The word Melan literally means establishing a union between two entities. In the context of Yoga and metaphysics, it refers to the establishment of a union between the Pran Shakti (the mystical powers of the vital life infusing wind forces inside the body) and the Shiva Shakti (the divine and supernatural powers of the consciousness called the Atma residing inside the bosom of the aspirant). This is brought about by the method of using the Mantras meant to be repeated during the Khechari Mudra done by ascetics as a part of Hath Yoga. It helps to bring about this union by focusing of the mind. This Mantra is given in detail in Yog Kundalini Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 17-20 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition. The Mantra has seven Beej letters as follows—"Hrim Bhum Sum Mum Pum Sum Kshum".

The Tarak Mantra--The word 'Tarak' means 'that which gives liberation and deliverance'; and 'Mantra' of course means 'a spiritual formula that enables the aspirant to achieve success in his desired spiritual goal'. Hence, the Tarak Mantra is that Mantra which empowers the spiritual aspirant to find liberation and deliverance from this mudanne world of birth and death along with its associated horrors.

The Tarak Mantra is therefore a group of esoteric, ethereal and holy syllables, words or phrases having mystical powers and divine potentials that can achieve miraculous results for the adherent as they have the authority to bestow special spiritual abilities on the creature and help in his liberation and deliverance, his emancipation and salvation. The word 'Tarak' means an entity that takes one across some formidable obstacle that seems otherwise insurmountable and unconquerable. It is a medium by which all hurdles and impediments in one's path that prevent one from attaining his spiritual goal are overcome easily. It is therefore an instrument that provides spiritual liberation and deliverance to the seeker, one that gives emancipation and salvation to the creature's soul, a vehicle that can take a creature across the ocean of endless miseries and pains from which he is suffering in this world and from which he sincerely wishes to find freedom.

The word Tarak means to cause or enable to pass or cross over, to carry over, one that rescues, provides relief and succour, one that can provide liberation and deliverance to the creature from any bondage. Further, the word Tarak also refers to the 'eye of wisdom that liberates one from the darkness of ignorance and delusions', and it has relevance here because meditation leads to the opening of the inner 'eye' of insight that leads to self realisation and enlightenment. 'Tarak' also means a meter of 4 x 13 syllables; hence it refers also to the various Mantras used for the purpose of meditation.

The Tarak Mantra is that which provides final deliverance to the soul of the spiritual seeker or aspirant. It is said in the Upanishads that the Mantras pertaining to Lord Ram are called the Tarak Mantra because it is on the strength of this Mantra that a dying man gets permanent liberation and deliverance from the shackle of this body as well as the world and its cycle of birth and death. Lord Ram is none other than the supreme transcendental Brahm himself personified. This fact is reiterated in Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 4/4.

Hence, the Mantra of Lord Ram is also known as the Tarak Mantra—refer: Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 1; Canto 4, verse no. 7; and Canto 6, verse nos. 1-29.

The Tarak Mantra of Lord Ram is ‘Raam/Raan(g) Raamaaya Namaha’—refer: (i) Tripadvibhuta Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 7, paragraph no. 22; (ii) Ram Rahasya Upanishad, verse no. 16.

This holy Tarak Mantra of Lord Ram is regarded as being equivalent to the Tarak Mantra of Brahm, viz. ‘OM’—refer: Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 2.

There are various Upanishads dealing with this aspect of meditation and spiritual deliverance—such as Advaita Tarak Upanishad and Tarak/Tarsar Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition. These Upanishads describe ‘Tarak Brahm’ in all its finer connotations.

Some of the important Upanishads that are dedicated to this concept of Tarak are the following—Tarak/Tarsar Upanishad; Advaitarak, verse nos. 3, 7-11; Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 1-12; Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 1-2 (full); Canto 4, verse nos. 7-8; Canto 5, verse nos. 4/1-47; Canto 6, verse nos. 1-29; Ram Rahasya Upanishad, Cantos 2-3 and 5 (full); the Atharva-shikha, 2/1; Atharvashir, Kandika (Canto) 4; Nrisingha Purvatapini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 15-16; Naradparivrajaka Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 8 which is fully devoted to this theme; Bhasma Jabal Upanishad, Canto 2, paragraph nos. 4 and 18 (Shiva’s Tarak Mantra); Dattatreya Upanishad, section 1, verse nos. 1-3, section 2-3; Tripadvibhuta Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 7, paragraph no. 22 (Tarak Mantra of Lord Ram).

According to *Tarsar Upanishad* of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, Canto 1, verse nos. 2, the Tarak Mantra is the following OM Namoha Narayanaya. To quote this verse in full—”Next, sage Bharadvaj asked sage Yagyavalkya, ‘What is that Tarak Mantra?’ Yagyavalkya replied, ‘The Tarak Mantra is the following—‘OM NAMOHA NARAYANAYA’. [This Mantra briefly means ‘OM salutations! I bow and pay my obeisance to the supreme Lord Narayan.] It refers to the supreme, eternal, omniscient, enlightened and transcendental consciousness known as the Atma (or Brahm). It is that divine entity that should be worshipped, adored, revered and honoured. [In other words, when one worships Narayan, he is deemed to be worshipping the supreme Brahm who has revealed himself as the pure conscious Atma of the individual creature at the micro level of creation, and as the Viraat Purush called Narayan (or Vishnu) at the macro level.]

[Now the sage explains the meaning of the three words of the Mantra—] The first word ‘OM’ represents the imperishable, immutable and eternal Atma. The second word ‘NAMOHA’ represents ‘Prakriti’ or Mother Nature. The third word ‘NARAYANAYA’ stands for the macrocosmic manifestation of the un-manifested transcendental Brahm. Anyone who understands this sublime and mystical fact is able to attain or acquire the essence of ‘Amrit’, which is the ambrosia of eternity, bliss and blessedness. This eclectic knowledge is the supreme form of knowledge.

[The entire Mantra has eight letters. Now the sage explains their significance in another way—] ‘OM’ represents the supreme Brahm. The 2nd letter ‘Na’ stands for Vishnu, the sustainer of creation. The 3rd letter ‘Ma’ represents Rudra or Lord Shiva, the concluder of creation. [These two letters combine to form the second word ‘Namo’]. The 4th letter ‘Na’ symbolises ‘Ishwar’, the macrocosmic causal body of creation. The 5th letter ‘Ra’ stands for ‘Viraat’, the macrocosmic gross body of creation. The 6th letter ‘Ya’ represents ‘Purush’, the macrocosmic Male aspect of creation. The 7th letter ‘Ana’ stands for ‘Bhagwan’, the great Lord. And the last letter, the 8th, is ‘Ya’ and it symbolises ‘Parmatma’, the supreme, transcendental Atma or Soul. [The 4th till the 8th letters form the third word ‘NA-RA-YA-NA-YA’ of the holy, sublime, ethereal and mystical ‘Tarak Mantra’.] In this way, those who become enlightened about the sublime, subtle and esoteric meaning of this Tarak Mantra become great persons (honourable souls) who transcend the humdrum and become exalted, erudite, wise and superior to their fellow men. [2]”

The Mantra that has the astounding spiritual potential and mystical powers that can provide the soul of the frustrated, agitated and hapless creature trapped in the labyrinth of miseries and torments with final liberation and deliverance is called the Tarak Mantra. It helps him find freedom from all the fetters and delusions associated with this world and creation, and obtain final peace and rest for his soul.

Other Mantras can give him everything else in this creation, such as attainment of all types of Siddhis and other super-natural powers and abilities, or acquisition of other rewards such as Dharma, Artha and Kaam as mentioned in verse no. 3 of Canto 5 of the Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad, or other such great achievements that are rare, but they do not provide him with ‘Moksha’ so easily as does the Tarak Mantra.

According to the Atharva Veda’s Dattatreya Upanishad, section 1, verse nos. 1-3, the ‘Tarak’ is that aspect of the Brahm, the Supreme Being, that bestows Mukti (spiritual liberation and deliverance; emancipation and salvation) to the seeker. Therefore, Brahm is called ‘Datta’—‘one who gives’ Mukti. And the Mantra for this aspect of Brahm is ‘Hans’.

The Tarak Mantra for Brahm, according to the Dattatreya Upanishad, section 1, verse no. 3 is Da Hans. To quote—”When Brahma (the creator) meditated and realised the divine form of Narayan, i.e. when he became Brahm-realised and enlightened about the Truth, he exclaimed—‘Da Hans’. That is, the Lord who gives (‘Da’ standing for one who gives) is none but ‘Hans’ (literally a divine Swan but implying the supreme transcendental Brahm who is the Supreme Being for whom this epithet is used). [This phrase ‘Da Hans’ may also mean ‘the

Supreme Being who gives life and consciousness to the world lives in the form of the Jiva, the creature, as his true self known as the Atma or the soul’.]

The Beej Mantra of this ‘Hans’ qualified as ‘Da’ is ‘Daam’ (i.e. the consonant ‘Da’, as pronounced in mother, with the long vowel sound of ‘Aa’ as pronounced in master, resulting in the letter ‘Daa’, and its Mantra form is ‘Daa(m) or Daam’ where ‘m’ is silent). Hence, ‘Daa(m)’ is the one-lettered Mantra of the Supreme Being known as Narayan and Hans.

[That is, the Beej Mantra or the seed monosyllabic divine letter related to the Supreme Being, who ‘gives’ and resides in the individual creature as his ‘Atma’, is ‘Daa’.]

This Beej Mantra ‘Daa(m)’ is the Tarak Mantra of the Supreme Being known as Hans.

One should meditate upon it. It gives freedom from having to reside in a mother’s womb and undergoing its accompanying horrors again. [That is, it frees the worshipper from having to take a birth again.] [3].”

The Atharva Veda’s *Atharvashir Upanishad*, Kandika 4, and *Naradparivrajak Upanishad*, Canto 8 describes that OM is the Tarak Mantra as follows—”Sage Narad asked the supreme creator Brahma—‘Oh Lord! Which is the Mantra that can help the creature to cross over or find freedom from the endless cycle of birth and death? I have humbly come to seek this knowledge from you, so please be kind to enlighten me on the subject.’ [Refer Canto 5, verse nos. 20, 26; Canto 7, verse no. 11.]

Brahma replied—‘So be it. I shall tell you about it. Oh son Narad, this Mantra known as Tarak Mantra is OM. [The word ‘Tarak’ means an instrument that provides spiritual liberation and deliverance, one that gives emancipation and salvation to the creature’s soul, a vehicle that takes across, a vehicle that can take a creature across the ocean of endless miseries and pains from which he is suffering in this world. The Tarak Mantra is a group of esoteric, ethereal and holy syllables, words or phrases having mystical powers and divine potentials that can achieve miraculous results for the adherent as they have the authority to bestow special spiritual abilities on the creature and help in his liberation and deliverance, his emancipation and salvation. The Mantra that has this potential is called the Tarak Mantra.]

OM is a personification of Brahm (i.e. it represents the supreme transcendental Divinity in its most subtle and sublime form). Hence, a wise spiritual aspirant must meditate and contemplate upon OM both as a ‘Vyasthi’ as well as a ‘Samasthi’. [Briefly, the word ‘Vyasthi’ means to treat an entity in isolation, individuality, single entity, and the word ‘Samasthi’ means totality, aggregate of things, all-inclusive. Therefore, OM is to be treated as standing for Brahm in all its manifestations—both at the micro level of creation as well as at the macro level of creation. It is to treat OM as an individual Mantra representing Brahm (‘Vyasthi’) as well as the vehicle for realising that universal cosmic Divinity that is all-pervading and all-including (‘Samasthi’).”

Refer also to *Narad Parivrajak Upanishad*, Canto 5, verse nos. 20, 26, and Canto 7, verse no. 110 which also endorse this view.

The Atharva Veda's Ganapati Upanishad, verse no. 8 says that the Tarak Mantra for Lord Ganesh is 'OM Gum/gun(g)'.

The Bhasma Jabal Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition describes two versions of Lord Shiva's Tarak Mantra as follows—:

(i) The first is in Canto 2, paragraph no. 4 which says that the describes the eight-letter Tarak Mantra of Lord Shiva as 'OM Namaha Maha-Devaaye'. To quote—

“The eight-letter Mantra consists of also of three words as follows—‘OM Namaha Maha-Devaaye’. [Here, the word Maha-Devaaye means the Great God or Lord. [OM + Ma + Haa + De + Vaa + Ye + Na + Maha = 8.]

The eight-letter Mantra of Shiva is known as the Tarak Mantra, the one which provides liberation and deliverance to the spiritual seeker; it ensures his emancipation and salvation. This Mantra provides liberation and deliverance to the devotees of Lord Shiva in the Lord's terrestrial abode known as the pilgrim city of Kashi.

Preaching this Tarak Mantra of Lord Shiva is equivalent to the preaching of the Mantras of the Vedas. [In other words, this is the Veda Mantra.]”

(ii) But the same Bhasma Jabal Upanishad says in its Canto 2, paragraph no. 18 that the Tarak Mantra of Lord Shiva is the six-letter Mantra formed by adding 'OM' to the original five-letter Mantra 'Namaha Shivaaye'. Hence, the final Tarak Mantra is 'OM Namaha Shivaaye'. [OM + Na + Maha + Shi + Vaa + Ye = 6. The 'OM' stands for salutations to the Supreme Being.]

The Tarak Mantras of Lord Ram have been elaborately described in the following Upanishads dealing with the eclectic philosophy pertaining to the divinity of Lord Ram—Ram Rahasya Upanishad, Cantos 2-3, and 5; Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 1-12, 41-67; Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 1; Canto 2, verse nos. 1-3; Canto 4, verse nos. 14; Canto 5, verse nos. 4/1-47; Canto 6, verse no. 1-6.

The Tarak Mantra of Lord Ram is elaborately described in *Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition which is exclusively dedicated to Lord Ram, as well as in *Tarak Upanishad* of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition which is dedicated to the subject of emancipation and salvation. The Tarak Mantra preached by Lord Shiva for the benefit of a dying man is that group of esoteric, ethereal and holy words, syllables or phrases that have stupendous magical, mystical and divine powers that can achieve miracles and bestows to the aspirant great potential and abilities, and one of them is the ability to find liberation and deliverance for one's own self, and when preached to others it can even liberate sinful creatures who can never expect to find emancipation themselves. It gives freedom from miseries, fears, torments and other misfortunes that devour a creature. It liberates a creature from the cycle of birth and death, the miseries and fears associated with this world, with old age, death and their accompanying horrors etc. (Atharva-shikhar Upanishad, 2/1; Advai-tarak Upanishad, 3; and Jabal Upanishad, canto 1. The ascetic/Yogi achieves liberation and deliverance by concentrating his internal thoughts at a point between the eyebrows where he realises the supreme,

transcendental existence of Brahm, and he mentally one with Brahm after this realisation (Advaitarak, 2-3).

The supreme transcendental Brahm is also known as Tarak Brahm. The word ‘Tarak’ means that which takes the creature and his soul across the virtually un-crossable ocean represented by this world and its delusions, an ocean that is also represented by the endless cycle of birth and death in which the creature is trapped eternally.

Tarak Brahm is that divine aspect of the super consciousness known as Brahm which provides the spiritual aspirant with Mukti and Moksha—i.e. final liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation. The formula used to achieve this eclectic goal is known as the Tarak Mantra.

The Tarak Brahm is that divine entity which can provide spiritual emancipation and salvation to the aspirant. It can liberate and deliver the creature from the endless cycle of birth and death and its accompanying torments and miseries. The word Tarak means to cause or enable to pass or cross over, to carry over, one that rescues, provides relief and succour, one that can provide liberation and deliverance to the creature from any bondage. Further, the word Tarak also refers to the ‘eye of wisdom that liberates one from the darkness of ignorance and delusions’, and it has relevance here because meditation leads to the opening of the inner ‘eye’ of insight that leads to self realisation and enlightenment. ‘Tarak’ also means a meter of 4 x 13 syllables; hence it refers also to the various Mantras used for the purpose of meditation, Mantras that have the power and the potentials to provide liberation and deliverance the soul from the cycle of birth and death.

According to the Atharva Veda’s Dattatreya Upanishad, section 1, verse nos. 1-3, the ‘Tarak’ is that aspect of the Brahm, the Supreme Being, that bestows Mukti (spiritual liberation and deliverance; emancipation and salvation) to the seeker. Therefore, Brahm is called ‘Datta’—‘one who gives’ Mukti. And the Mantra for this aspect of Brahm is ‘Hans’.

To quote verse no. 2 of *Dattatreya Upanishad*—“I am known as ‘Datta’—one who gives. [Here it means that Lord Narayan is the Tarak, i.e. he is the One who provides—gives, bestows, grants—the worshipper with the fruit of spiritual liberation and deliverance; the one divine entity that helps the creature to find freedom from all his fetters pertaining to this entrapping world and the gross body in which his soul lives.]

Those who realise this fact, as well as those who preach this fact to others are no longer regarded as ordinary mortal creatures of the mundane and entrapping world of delusions, but are deemed to be liberated themselves as well as be a provider of liberation and deliverance to others.’

[That is, those devotees who meditate upon me and realise my truthful form also become my own image in as much as they are transformed from being a creature who is trapped in this delusory world to an enlightened being who has obtained liberation and deliverance himself, along with being empowered to liberate others. They are ‘Tarak’ themselves. Since I am known as ‘Datta’, as I am the provider—a giver, a bestower, the one who grants the boon of Mukti or spiritual liberation and deliverance to the devotee—the worshipper who attains me

(Brahm; the spiritual Absolute Truth), becoming self-realised and Brahm-realised as a result, also becomes a 'Datta' himself as he is empowered to show the path of Mukti (liberation and deliverance) and the path of Sattva (truth) to others.]"

There are various Upanishads dealing with this aspect of meditation and spiritual deliverance which is known as Tarak. For instance especial mention can be made of the Shukla Yajur Veda's Advai Tarak Upanishad, especially its verse nos. 7 and 9, and Tarak Upanishad. As the name itself suggests, these two Upanishads are dedicated to this theme of Tarak, and they describe Tarak Brahm in all its finer connotations.

The *Ram Rahasya Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 1, verse nos. 5-6, and Canto 2, verse no. 1 refer to Lord Ram as the Tarak Brahm when Hanuman preached about the Lord to some sages who wished to know the esoteric secrets about the divinity of Lord Ram, and how a creature can attain his much-cherished dream of obtaining Mukti or Mokhsa (liberation and deliverance, as well as emancipation and salvation respectively) by being devoted to the Lord, and using the Lord's Mantras to reach his spiritual goal. Here, Lord Ram is referred to as the Tarak Brahm.

Now, let us quote this Upanishad—

"Canto 1, Verse no. 5 = Hanuman replied, 'Oh the exalted ascetics, sages, seers and devotees of Lord Vishnu! Listen to what I have to say. It has the potential of destroying all sins and cutting through the fetters of this deluding and fearsome world (5).

"Canto 1, Verse no. 6 = It incorporates the essence of all the scriptural and metaphysical essences, their tenets, their axioms and maxims. Besides this, it is about the 'Tarak Brahm', i.e. it is about the Brahm who delivers one from the torments associated with this seemingly endless cycle of birth and death, and provides liberation and deliverance to its followers.

Certainly, Ram is the supreme transcendental Brahm personified. Lord Ram is an embodiment of the supreme form of Tapa (doing severe penances, observing of austerities, enduring hardships and undergoing sufferance for a noble cause). Indeed, Lord Ram is that ultimate 'Tattwa' (literally the essence, the fundamental or basic element or aspect) you talk about, and indeed Lord Ram is also that 'Tarak Brahm' referred to herein above (who provides one's soul with the ultimate liberation and deliverance from the miseries and torments associated with this deluding and artificial world of entrapments, from the shackles that this gross body represents, as well as from the fetters created by being engrossed in ignorance and delusions pertaining to them both)' (6).

"Canto 2, Verse no. 1 = Sage Sankadi and others asked Hanuman, 'Oh the strong and valiant son of Anjani! Lord Ram is famous as Tarak and as Brahm (i.e. he is renowned as the one who provides liberation and deliverance to the soul of a creature, as well as is a manifestation of the supreme transcendental Brahm, the Supreme Being himself). We request you to preach his divine and holy Mantras for the benefit of all of us."

Japa:— Mantras are usually used to do Japa with; this is a continuous repetition of the Mantra by the spiritual aspirant or seeker of divine intervention to invoke the inherent potentials and powers of the specific Mantra to fulfill his desired objective—whether it be spiritual or mundane.

The importance of Japa, which is a repetition of holy name of the deity represented by monosyllables or complex words or letter-combinations called a ‘Mantra’ is succinctly explained by Swami Vivekanand when he says, ‘The inaudible repetition of the Mantra, accompanied with the thinking of its meaning, is called mental repetition and is the highest type of Japa’ (Complete Works, 1/190). His Guru, the enlightened Sri Ram Krishna said, ‘Japa means silently repeating God’s name in solitude. When you chant his holy name with single minded devotion, you can see (visualise) his form and realise him. It is like reaching a piece of timber (e.g. a log of wood) floating in water and attached to the bank with a chain. By holding the chain and moving forward, link by link, you can reach the log. In the same way, by repeating God’s holy name, you become absorbed in him and finally realise him’ (Gospel of Ram Krishna, 878-9).

Japa of the Mantra has basically three forms—audible (with proper pronunciation), inaudible (just by moving of the lips), and mental (without any external sign of repetition). The last is the best way as endorsed by Swami Vivekanand himself as above.

Regarding continual Japa of the Mantra, we must remember what Swami Vivekanand had said, ‘Each deity chosen by the seeker (called his Ishta Devata) has a specific Mantra (even as each man has a specific name; it is like the relevant God’s signature tune). The Mantra is the external word to express the particular ideal that the deity stands for. Constant repetition of the word helps to fix the ideal firmly in the mind’ (Complete Works, 7/63) because ‘as thou thinkest, so art thou’ (Complete Works, 6/90— a reference to Buddha’s Sermon on the Mount).

The benefit of constant Japa of Mantras can also be explained as follows— the consciousness of a man exists in three states, viz. the waking state, the dreaming state and the deep sleep state. During the waking state, the conscious is so engrossed in performing the functions of perceptions and feelings linked with the gross body that it remains bogged down in the narrow domain of physical experiences. But when this conscious is trained to do another task simultaneously with this routine function of worldly perceptions and feelings, it can perform this new task easily with due practice. For example, it is possible for a man to train his mind to do routine, monotonous task without making an error while listening to music. On the contrary, this additional task makes his routine activities less tiring and boring because the consciousness gets detached from the usual experiences of the physical body and become relatively free for some time to focus on the other task at hand—which is listening to music or repeating the Mantra, which in their turn have a soothing effect on the tired nerves. Now, this repetition forms the background record of the subconscious or the memory bank of the mind. So, when the consciousness is in the second state of existence, that is the dreaming state, it dreams of those subjects that have been stored in its memory

bank—the various inputs from the world as well as the constant psychological impact of the Mantras. The effect is obvious—the dreams become influenced by the latter influences. Finally, in the third state of deep sleep when neither the external stimuli nor the activity of the mind affect the consciousness, it (consciousness) can enjoy the sub conscious without any restraint. It is here that the Mantras, positive thinking, good or bad thoughts etc. come into play.

It is like the activation of the inner mind (sub conscious) of the man. And this is why it is emphasised that the Mantras have effect only when their meaning and import are understood because when this inner mind is activated, it comes in direct contact with the consciousness. The more erudite and classified the sub conscious, the more elevated the inner-self becomes. Just like the personality of a man is effected by, inter alia, his surroundings and circumstances, this inner-self is also enhanced or degraded in stature due to this sub conscious. Mantras, with their meanings understood (and stored in the sub conscious), uplift this inner-self of the creature. The creature becomes more spiritual and divine because it is guided by the ‘inner mind’ to identify itself more closely with the pure and divine Spirit (Atma/soul) in him. This Spirit is the emperor of the whole set up—it is pure consciousness, an entity that is the reporting authority for the sub conscious.

Chanting of Mantras is like caressing—gentle but effective and sustained—of the heart and the mind. When one chants softly, one’s emotions become more gentle and soft, refined and elevated. Chanting or doing Japa of Mantras help to subdue or calm agitations of the mind and control it. It acts as a balm over ruffled nerves of the mind.

There is another school of thought that says that Mantras need not have a meaning, need not be understood to be effective. According to this line of thought, Mantras resemble the cosmic sound, which according to the scriptures, was the origin of the whole cosmos. These Mantras incorporate certain sound codes that could generate specific energies because sound waves have energy. That is why different Mantras are prescribed for different uses because the specific energy needed to deal with a given set of problems will be generated by a given set of syllables producing a given set of sound waves or sonic codes.

In mythological lore, the ancient sages heard these syllables which represented the cosmic sound called ‘Naad’ in their inner-self in a state of trance. That is why most of the Mantras are called ‘Srutis’— things that were heard and not consciously created as meaningful words. They were, in effect, a compilation of sound-elements heard or conceptualised by intuition.

Sir John Woodroffe, in his book ‘The garland of letters’ describes the origin of Mantras as follows— ‘The Mantras are sonic patterns which represent in themselves and in all their variations all the possibilities of articulate speech in all languages’.

The chanting of the Mantras during ritual ceremonies is in a group following a specific rhythm while during individual repetition (Japa) it can be a simple murmur or done in absolute silence where the Mantra is repeated in the mind. The constant and persistent

chanting and repeating of the Mantra produces a continuous stream of sound waves. Continuous Japa will create a halo of energy around the aspirant. Modern research of sound energy—especially ultrasonic—has proved that vibration at a high frequency can produce enormous amount of energy that can convert the surrounding material into vapour and ash almost instantaneously. The sound generated by the Mantras are originally subtler in level than the ultrasound, but the brain's electrical energy and strength of concentration can amplify the frequency of sound waves to beyond the limits of ultrasound. That is why ancient sages could turn to ashes anyone and anything by chanting a set of Mantras if they wished to do so. Ample examples are available in ancient texts where kings and Gods feared the wrath of sages and seers just for this reason.

Like electromagnetic waves can be captured by an appropriate instrument, e.g. radar or a dish, the sound wave energy can also be captured by the body, and the instrument here are the ear and the skin. There are many instances where creatures of the animal kingdom can receive sound impulses through their skin (e.g. snakes, earthworms). Similarly, the Mantras create a particular set of sonic wave energy that can alter the behavioral patterns of the reception centers of the objects which are targeted by the Mantras. No wonder that ancient sages used to chant Mantra for rainfall, for good harvest, for the general well-being of the society, to cast off diseases because the germs causing the diseases were either rendered ineffective or killed (e.g. in today's world, there are electronic mosquito and insect repelling electronic devices that emit ultra sonic sounds which stupefies the insect or the mosquito and it either flies off or drops dead).

In the spiritual realm, therefore, the Mantras act like radio frequencies and help the creature to establish its link with the cosmic energy field which we call 'God' and communicate with it. By extension, this one way communication established by the Mantra can be upgraded to a two way communication between the God and the creature by the means of Dhyan so that the seeker/aspirant can communicate with his chosen God.

The practice of repetition is popular because you can recite even though you can't read the text, you can repeat and recite even if your body can't endure the physical demands of meditation and rigors of spiritual practices, you can repeat and recite Mantras even while walking, breathing, cooking, waiting in a queue etc. You can recite even amid the din of the mundane world. What is required here is firm faith, conviction and determination. The good medicine imbibed will have its effects notwithstanding your literacy or ignorance in the intricate details of the medical book, as it were.

Yantra:- An Yantra is an instrument or geometrical device which is used for ritualistic worship using the science of Tantra. The Yantras, such as the 'Sri Yantra' for worship of Shakti or the Goddess representing cosmic energy of creation, or 'Ram Yantra' used to invoke Lord Ram's blessings and seek his divine intercession, were discovered by ancient sages during the Vedic period (roughly 3,000-200 BCE) for spiritual, intellectual and

worldly well-being of human kind. We shall see here in brief the rationale behind and the significance of these mystical designs which are geometrically perfect.

Yantras are diagrams or sketches which are tools, devices or implements for mental concentration and meditation. A Mantra is a crystalline form of the specific divine and sublime energy, the Japa (repetition of the Mantra) is the flowing current of this energy while the Yantra is a symbol or monogram or a spectrograph of this source of energy, and Tantra is the science which puts it to use. Yantras are outline sketches of the contours of divine energy fields, much like the graph drawn by an ECG machine measuring heart beat.

The use of Mantra in worship, e.g., in meditation, enables the aspirant to focus the specific currents generated by the group of specific Mantras used in that Yantra. These Mantras act like the cathodes and anodes in an electro-voltaic cell producing electrical energy; the Yantra is the apparatus employed to produce this electric current, as it were.

The word 'Yantra' is derived from 'Yam' and 'Tra'. The word 'Yam' means self-restraint, and 'Tra' means tri. Its implied meaning is — 'the Yantra helps in self control and restraint of the mind, body and the external behaviour of the aspirant vis-à-vis the world, i.e., the trilogy of creation, and this removes sorrows and distresses, gives peace and tranquility as well as success in both the worldly as well as the spiritual pursuits of the aspirant'. The Yantras are symbolically the abodes of Gods for whom they are dedicated, and these Gods represent the divine spiritual powers in its varied manifestations. Each Yantra is specific for a particular God or Goddess even as any scientific instrument is specific for the purpose for which it is created or assembled.

All Mantras have their origin in letters and syllables of any language and they have their original form in the cosmic sound called 'Naad' which is represented by the cryptic symbol OM and its monogram 'ॐ'. Similarly, all the cosmic energy fields present in the cosmos are encrypted in the Yantra which is their monogram similar to 'ॐ' representing 'Naad'.

Structural features of Yantra— In chemistry we learn that organic compounds having complex structures are represented by various letters of the alphabet, such as for example 'C' for carbon, 'H' for hydrogen, 'N' for nitrogen, 'O' for oxygen and so on. The complex structures of a molecule of a compound such as benzene is depicted by joining these letters by bars, lines etc.. In case of Yantras, the same process is involved—the sketch is the bar and line while the Mantra or seed/root words for various divine sources of energy called their patron Gods are like their chemical counterparts in the form of letters for different atoms of the elements.

A dot '·' in a Yantra symbolises the nucleus of cosmic energy and is the power source of all action and motion. This dot can be extended to form a line, a triangle, a quadrangle, a circle etc.. These indicate various nature, hue, magnitude and frequency of the cosmic energy current emanating in the cosmos and aspired by the aspirant to be harnessed for his use. They are similar to an integrated circuit (IC) drawn to represent an electronic circuit of a computer or any electronic gadget.

The Vedic sages had invented a coding system of symbols, signs, alphabets etc. to represent the various elements of the cosmic energy while designing these instruments. Specific combinations of these cryptic clues were used in different Yantras to serve a specific purpose just like a specific key is used to unlock a particular lock.

In Upanishadic texts which deal with such Yantras, details are provided regarding the placement of the seed/root words, how to use the Yantra, the benefits of worshipping or using it, meditating upon it as well as for concentrated and dedicated use of the Yantra. Even as use of any instrument necessarily requires knowledge of the science that governs the operation of that particular instrument or apparatus, the Yantras would also entail a thorough knowledge of the underline principles in order to make them effective and comprehensible as well as pass the test of rationality or scientific reasoning.

Tantra:- The etymology of Tantra has two constituents, viz. ‘Tan’ meaning to spread, and ‘Tra’ meaning to protect. Hence, the composite word Tantra refers to those texts that spread their reach over a vast philosophical realm to encompass all the teachings of the scriptures, in addition to utilizing other aspects of ritualistic worship, such as employment of Yantras, Mantras etc., to harness their divine potentials for the benefit of the votaries of such philosophies. The Tantras draw their inspiration and fundamental philosophy from the Vedas. The religious attitude of the Tantras is basically the same as that of the Vedic rituals. Both emphasise the control over the forces of Nature. Both the systems have rituals as their basis, and a large pantheon of Gods who receive offerings and respond to the prayers of the aspirant.

The primary Tantric texts are called Aagams and Nigams, Yaamalas, Daamaras, and Buddhist works. The Aagams are those texts which are theological treatises as well as practical manuals of Tantra. They contain information about the Mantras (holy words or phrases having stupendous divine and magical occult powers) and Yantras (geometrical instruments employed during occult ritualistic forms of worship using Tantra texts), as well as exposition on Gyan (metaphysical philosophy), Yoga (psychic philosophy), Kriya (rituals), and Charya (worship). They elaborately discuss such topics as metaphysics, cosmology, the concept and method of liberation and deliverance, devotion (Bhakti), meditation (Yoga), magical charms and spells, temple building techniques, image (idol) making, domestic observances, social rules, public festivals, and a host of other topics.

The Aagamas are Tantric texts in which Lord Shiva teaches Parvati, his divine consort and a manifestation of the cosmic energy and creative forces of Nature. On the other hand, in the Nigams, it is the other way round, i.e. it is Parvati who teaches Shiva. The Aagama are divided into three principal sections—viz. Shaiva, Shakta and Vaishnav.

The Shaiva Aagams are twenty eight in number, though the Sammohan Tantra speaks of texts as comprising of thirty two Tantra texts, three hundred twenty five sub-Tantras called Uptantras, ten Sanhitas, two Yamalas, and three Damaras. Later works of these Aagams show a distinct leaning towards non-dual philosophy of Advaitya Vedanta. Each Aagam has several subsidiary texts called Up-aagams. The patron deity of Shaiva Aagams is Lord Shiva.

The Shakta Aagams glorify Shakti as the cosmic Mother, the creative aspect of the supreme God (Brahm). They prescribe numerous ritualistic forms of worship of this cosmic Divinity in the form of the Mother in various forms. In some aspects they are much like the Purans.

The Vaishnava Aagams are of four types—viz. Vaikhanas, Pancharatra, Pratishthasara, and Vijnanalalita. According to the Sammohan Tantra, this group includes seventy five Tantra texts, two hundred five subsidiary texts called Up-tantra, eight Sanhitas, one Yamala, and two Damaras.

Yaamala is a class of ancient literature that gets its name because it contains the secret conversation between the deity and his divine consort, who form the divine couple. The word 'Yaamala' means to be united, a couple. Yaamala has eight texts attributed to realised souls called Bhairavs. The most famous text of this group is Brahm Yaamala. Others are Vishnu Yaamala, Rudra Yaamala, Laxmi Yaamala, Uma Yaamala, Skanda Yaamala, Ganesh Yaamala and Aditya Yaamala. These texts present a large variety of Gods and Goddesses along with numerous local deities and cults, and present a well developed mode of worship by people of all castes. They preserve the orthodox methods of early times along with introducing many heterodox concepts.

Daamara means an attendant of Lord Shiva, and these are texts attributed to Lord Shiva's attendants. The word also means to wonder, hence they contain wondrous teachings pertaining to Lord Shiva. They are six in number, such as Yoga Daamara, Shiva Daamara, Durga Daamara, Saaraswat Daamara, Brahmada Daamara and Gandharava Daamara.

Buddhists are later day group of literature developed around the seventh century. Tantric Buddhist mysticism assumed three basic forms—viz. Vajraayan, Sahajanya, and Kaalachakraayan. Vajraayan emphasises the importance of Mantras, Mudras and Mandala. Sahajayana discards all formalisms. Kalachakrayana lays importance to specifics of time—such as Muhurta (auspicious timing), Tithis (auspicious dates), Nakshatras (auspicious arrangements of stars) etc., thereby bringing subtle aspects of astronomy and astrology into worship.

The essential philosophy of Tantra—This philosophy emphasises that Reality is Satchidananda or the supreme transcendental Divinity known as Brahm. The etymology of the word is as follows = 'Sat' meaning true or truthful existence, 'Chit' meaning conscious knowledge, and 'Anand' meaning bliss and happiness. This eclectic and sublime state of existence becomes restricted due to prevalence of Maya or delusions and ignorance. It is due to this Maya that the transcendental nature of this Satchidananda is expressed in terms of various forms and categories as explained in various Hindu philosophical treatises such as the Sankhya Shastra. According to Vedanta, this Maya is active only on a relative plane in the three phases of creation, viz. creation, preservation and conclusion. This creation has no pith and reality in it, and therefore anything in this creation would automatically be unreal and imaginary. True knowledge or Gyan is the revelation of this fact, and it enlightens the person

about the only 'truth' that remains after elimination of all falsehoods, and it is pure Consciousness in the form of Satchidananda.

However, according to Tantra this Satchidananda is manifested in the form of Shiva or the Absolute Divinity, and Parvati or the powerful creative cosmic energy and authority of this Absolute. Both are eternally united with each other like a word and its meaning; one would be useless without the other. Tantra says that Brahm, the pure transcendental Consciousness, without the Shakti is only half the truth. Therefore, perfect and holistic knowledge or Gyan is the knowledge of the 'whole of Divinity' consisting of pure consciousness as well as its power of creation. Therefore, these two aspects of creation, i.e. Shiva and Shakti, are separate only in a relative term in this relative world. It says that the individual creature or Jiva is none other than the universal Soul called Shiva revealed in that form, and its unification with the Supreme Being is akin to the Shakti representing the deity's cosmic authority, powers and potentials of creation, sustenance and conclusion. The merger of the individual soul with the cosmic soul is actually unification of these two aspects of Divinity. To achieve this, a system of worship involving religious rituals centering on Shakti worship and revolving around elaborate occult and esoteric practices involving various Mantras, Yantras, Mudras (gestures) etc. were devised. Therefore, essentially, the basic philosophy of the Tantra is an amalgamation and modification of ancient philosophies already existing at the time this school of worship of the universal Divinity came into being.

According to this philosophy, the creative process and the creatures are real and not merely illusions and superimpositions upon Brahm. But it emphasises that ultimately, the main liberation and deliverance for the creature is when it becomes one with this Brahm.

It says that the evolution that the non-dual entity or Brahm undergoes is for real and not merely apparent as in Vedanta. This process involves the manifestation of certain powers along with restrictions. This accounts for the various forms of existence along with the actions and reactions that are observed in this manifest world. These in turn create the whole fabric of fetters that tie the creature in their web. Bound by them, the creature acts like an animal. The main goal of Tantra is to cut these fetters so that the creature can break free and become one with the ultimate Reality, which is called Shiva in Tantric texts.

Tantra is a religious treatise supposed to be compiled by Lord Shiva, the patron God of ascetics and hermits, which contains mystical charms and secret formulas for the attainment of super natural powers; the occult science and its prescribed form of worship that involve elaborate rituals, magical charms, offering of sacrifices etc.

There are **three dimensions of Tantra**—(a) Mantra, (b) Yantra and (c) Tantra. Mantra is pure sound, and it consists of various monosyllables and letters pertaining to specific Gods much like alphabets used in algebra and other branches of mathematics as well as in complex physics diagrams to depict various coded information and data. Every sound has an energy wave associated with it which takes a definite form depending upon the frequency, amplitude and other aspects as proved by an oscilloscope. The seed or root words forming the Mantra are the purest forms of sound. The Yantra is the physical form that these sounds take, and is

depicted in the form of a diagram or sketch having various Mantras like a text book of music. Yantra is an instrument to use the Mantra much like the musical instrument is used for the purpose of transforming the magic of sound to produce a captivating and enchanting music which has a therapeutic value as well. Again, a Yantra is like an instrument of physics that uses various components to create a machine that can generate stupendous powers that are beyond the scope of these individual components when they are kept separately. The Yantra is like a figure in geometry that uses lines and different alphabets to mark various parameters, and then uses these parameters to deduce some fundamental truths of science, whether it is in the realm of mathematics or of physics. The Mantras are these coded alphabets, and the Yantra is the sketch that is used to tap their potentials to provide supernatural powers to the person who uses them.

Even as technology of harnessing the stupendous powers of the electron which helps a man in many ways is not possible without the use of an instrument to make it possible, the magnificent and glorious powers of the Mantra in the field of spiritualism cannot be properly tapped for the benefit of an aspirant without the use of such an instrument called a Yantra.

Tantra is therefore the technique, the science, to put to beneficial use the Mantra and the Yantra. The Tantra helps to achieve success in the spiritual realm where the mind cannot physically go; it takes a man beyond his physical capabilities and bestow him with certain mystical and ethereal powers. That is why ancient sages could perform stupendous and seemingly impossible tasks using the various Mantras and Yantras through the technology of the Tantra. Tantra is, therefore, a science in the realm of metaphysics and occult. It must be noted here that there is a subtle difference between self realisation and emancipation of the soul using the technique of Yoga (meditation and contemplation) using the various Mantras to focus attention on the ultimate Truth (Brahm and the pure self as consciousness), and seeking benefits from the same Mantras using the Tantra technique. While the former lays emphasis on detachment from the artificial and deluding world and prepares an aspirant for realising the ultimate Truth about his pure self and its oneness with the Supreme Being, the latter is usually not so focused on self-realisation, and is usually employed by those who rely upon occult practices to achieve great supernatural powers which they can employ to attain great heights of spiritual ecstasy and bliss. But more often than not, such practices lead to fall of the aspirant because they involve many very difficult and unconventional methods and practices that are considered out of bounds by the main stream philosophers of metaphysics. Such Tantra form of worship is followed usually by the worshippers of different forms of the great Goddesses which form a part of Hindu mythology and mysticism. For the main stream worshippers, this is generally regarded as an inferior and a demeaning form of worship of the divinity which should not be subjected to certain rituals and beliefs that form a part of Tantra worship. Besides this, Tantra is used to achieve some worldly successes and accomplish certain worldly objectives as compared to pure metaphysics and meditation that pulls the man away from such considerations.

The **Tantra philosophy** is a modification of the philosophy of Vedanta and Snakhya. According to Vedanta, the process of creation relates to the supreme transcendental Brahm

and his Maya, the delusion-creating powers of this Brahm. According to Sankhya, this Brahm is called Purush and his creative energy is called Prakriti. In Tantra, Brahm or Purush is replaced by the Shiva principle, and the Maya or Prakriti is replaced by the Shakti principle. The Tantra philosophy recognizes that this creation came into being by the union (Yoga) between Shiva (the supreme transcendental and imperishable Brahm) principle and Shakti (the dynamic Shiva) principle. They are not separate from one another, but a unified principle called 'Shiva-Shakti'. The relationship between Shiva and Shakti is like that of fire (Shiva) and its power to burn (Shakti). In the inactive state it is Shiva, while in its active state it is Shakti. They are inseparable from one another; they are non-dual two-in-one entity. The Shiva is Nirguna Brahm wherein the divine attributes called the various Gunas are inherent but dormant and latent. When these Gunas begin to unravel and unfold themselves in the process of creation and its evolution, the same Shiva (Brahm) becomes Saguna. From this Shakti comes into existence the Naad, the cosmic vibration of sound in ether. Since any sound must have a central point of origin, there developed the concept of the Bindu, the dot or the central point. This Bindu represented the Shiva principle drawing from the vision of a drop of the male semen which is a necessary spark to initiate the process of life. The crescent-shaped bowl called the Chandra was the cosmic womb into which this cosmic sperm was dropped. Their union resulted in the evolvment of the creation. In this context, the word 'Beej' meaning the seed would refer to both the cosmic sperm as well as the cosmic ovum—hardly distinguishable from one another in their primary form as consisting of a single generative cell.

From this union of Shiva and Shakti evolved the twenty four Tattvas (elements) as follows—one Mahat + one Ahankar + the ten sense organs called the Indris (five organs of perception—ear, eye, nose, tongue and skin, and five organs of action—hand, leg, mouth, anus and genital) + one Mana (mind) + the five subtle elements called the Tanmatras (the senses of perception—sight, smell, sound, taste and touch) + the five gross elements called Bhuts (earth, water, fire, air and sky) = 23 total. To this is added the inherent 'Shakti' or energy that empowers them all to function according to their assigned duties, and the total comes to $23 + 1 = 24$ in all.

From the Shiva (the attributeless Brahm) principle at the macro level evolved the five Gods or deities—viz. Vishnu, Brahma, Ishan, Rudra and Sada-Shiva. The Shakti resides in the Kundalini, the coiled subtle energy center in the human body, located in the region of the Mooladhar Chakra situated at the base of the spine.

The Jiva or the living being is none but this Shiva (Brahm) himself, but covered by a veil of ignorance and mired by delusions. When Yoga and other methods spiritual awakening are employed to remove this veil, the aspirant is able to arouse the latent divinity in him and realise the Shiva principle inherent to him. In other words, he becomes self and Brahm realised. This is his Moksha or Mukti—emancipation and salvation, or liberation and deliverance respectively.

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There are countless books based on Indian scriptures and their spiritual, metaphysical and theological principles written in English by Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia with a missionary zeal as his humble service to his beloved Lord Sri Ram.

These books are a 'book lover's dream come true' and stand out heads-over-shoulders in the realm of metaphysical, philosophical, devotional, spiritual and classical literature of India. Such as for example, there are Goswami Tulsidas' myriad works with Sri Ram as the central theme which are glittering like gems, poetically told, stupendous in beauty, marvelously narrated and contain a treasury of fathomless wisdom and deep insight into spiritualism, metaphysics and philosophy. Then there is Veda Vyas' glorious narration of the epic story of Sri Ram in Adhyatma Ramayan and Devi Puran Maha Bhagwat Ramayan. The Upanishads represent the epitome of Indian philosophical, metaphysical and spiritual treatises—the marvellous highest pinnacle that human thought can possibly reach. They are acclaimed the world over as highly evolved and intellectually enlightening books. The Vedas, on the other hand, are believed to be revealed books. The two form the two legs of Hinduism.

The author has presented a simple, day to day bilingual version (Hindi and English) of these stupendous texts. A huge array of information on Sri Ram and Hanuman culled from the Vedas, Upanishads, Purans, and myriad other sources have been systematically presented by the author in lucid, florid, easy flowing, vibrant and captivating English language— useful to a layman, a devotee, curious people, research scholars, casual as well as serious readers, plain book lovers or connoisseurs of classical literature. A must read for everyone.

All the books have original text with line-to-line easy flowing English version with necessary explanatory notes, appendices, etc.

The list of books are as follows:

Detailed English versions with commentary on Books of ‘Goswami Tulsidas’:

- * Vairagya Sandipani of Goswami Tulsidas.
- * Vinai Patrika of Goswami Tulsidas.
- * Geetawali of Goswami Tulsidas.
- * Kavitaawali of Goswami Tulsidas.
- * Dohawali of Goswami Tulsidas.
- * Janki Mangal of Goswami Tulsidas.
- * Ram Lala Nahachu of Goswami Tulsidas
- * Parvati Mangal of Goswami Tulsidas.
- * Barvai Ramayan of Goswami Tulsidas.
- * Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand (Canto 1) [The other 6 Cantos, i.e. Ayodhya Kand, Aranya Kand, Kishkindha Kand, Sundar Kand, Lanka Kand, and Uttar Kand, are in the process of writing, and would be made available, one by one, as soon as they are ready for publication.]

Detailed English Books based on original texts of Goswami Tulsidas, with extensive commentary:

- * Story of Ravana and the Epic War of Lanka Told in Slow Motion: in 2 Volumes (5Parts)
- * ‘Sundar Kand’ of Ram Charit Manas
- * The Kaagbhusund Ramayan or The Aadi Ramayan
- * The Divine Story of Lord Shiva’s marriage with Parvati (based on Ram Charit Manas, Parvati Mangal & Vinai Patrika)
- * Lord Ram’s marriage with Sita (based on Ram Charit Manas).
- * Ram Geeta: The Gospel of Lord Ram.
- * A Divine Biography of Lord Ram & Glory of Lord’s Holy Name.

Other Books on the theme of Lord Ram:

- * Glory of Lord Ram’s Holy Name, Sacred Mantras, Stotras & Hymns
- * Anthology of Sacred Hymns, Stotras & Mantras of Lord Ram.

- * Upanishads dedicated to Lord Ram & their Philosophy.
- * Saint Surdas' "Ram Charitawali".
- * The Chariot of God—Dharma Rath.
- * Bhakti—Devotion for Lord God.
- * Saints and Non-Saints, Their Character and Comparison.
- * 'Ram Charit Manas' (the holy lake containing the ambrosia in the form of the divine story describing the deeds and acts of Lord Ram who was an incarnation of the Supreme Being upon earth) by Goswami Tulsidas—full text with English introduction.
- * Life sketch of Goswami Tulsidas.

The Trilogy of Books on the epic known as the 'Ramayan':

- * English rendering of Adbhut Ramayan by sage Valmiki.
- * English rendering of Adhyatma Ramayan by sage Veda Vyas.
- * English rendering of Devi Puran's Ramayan by sage Veda Vyas.

English Books dedicated to Lord Shiva:

- * Book 1= Marriage of Lord Shiva with Parvati
- * Book 2= Sacred Hymns of Lord Shiva.
- * Book 3= Lord Shiva—His legend, Upanishads, Puran, Hymns & Parvati Mangal.

A Book in English dedicated to Lord Hanuman:

- * The Legendary Glory of Hanuman.

English Books explaining various spiritual and metaphysical concepts based on the Upanishads:

- * A True Guru (The Qualities, Importance and Need of a True Teacher, Preceptor, Guide and Advisor).
- * Maya: The Whirlpool of Delusions in Creation.
- * The Triumvirate of Creation: According to the Upanishads.
- * The 'Pentagon of Creation'—The Panch Tattvas, Panch Bhuts, Panch Prans & Panch Koshas.
- * Revelation of Creation as envisioned in the Upanishads.
- * YOGA—Its Practice & Philosophy according to the Upanishads.
- * Who is a Guru?
- * The 24 Avtaars (incarnations) of Lord Vishnu.
- * The Viraat Purush—the cosmic, all-embracing form of the Supreme Being: as conceived in the Upanishads, Adhyatma Ramayan of Veda Vyas, and Ram Charit Manas of Goswami Tulsidas.
- * OM and NAAD: the cosmic revelation of Super Consciousness extensively explained and compiled from the Upanishads.
- * Vaak (spoken word), Akshar (alphabet) & Sristi (creation).

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- * The concept of 'Kalaa'.
 - * 'Brahm' in the eyes of the Upanishads.
 - * 'Sanyas' with 'Vairagya Shatkam' of Bhartiari.
 - * The 'Mahavakyas' (Great Sayings) of the Upanishads.
 - * The 'Tattwas' (elements) and the Gunas (qualities) According to the Upanishads.
 - * The Fundamental Elements and Character Traits of Creation as Enunciated in the Upanishads { available only on www.draft2digital.com }
 - * The Metaphor of the Hansa in the Upanishads: The symbolism of a Grand Swan used to explain the wisdom of spiritual and metaphysical principles by the Upanishads.

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- * 'Arunachal Pancharatna & Rudra Ashtak'. { In English, co-produced by Rev. Janardan Kallianand-Swami of USA and Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia. }

***Detailed English renderings, with explanatory notes and commentaries of the 108 Upanishads classified according to the Vedic tradition.**

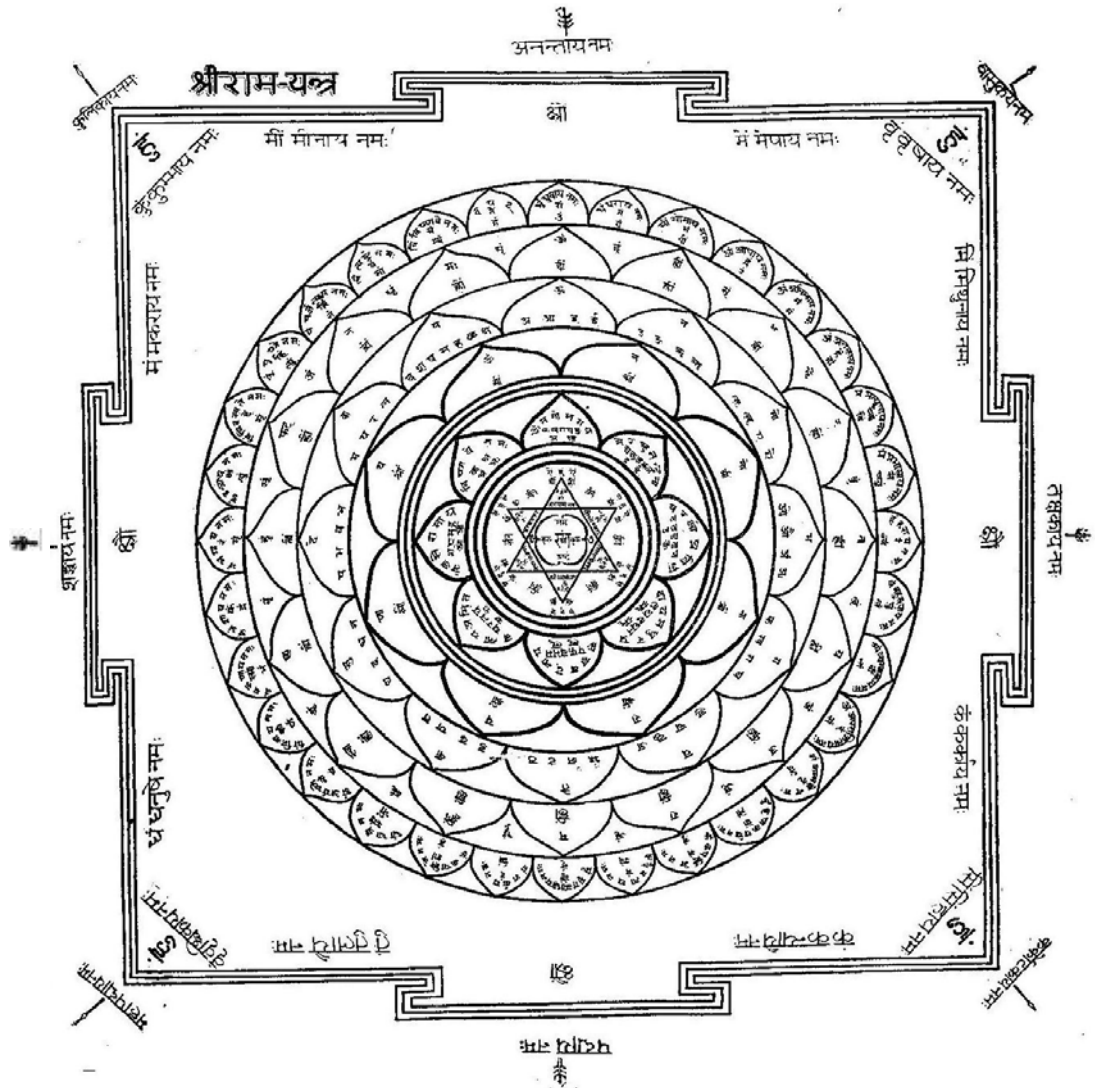
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NOTE: A full-blown English rendering of Tulsidas' epic 'Ram Charit Manas' is under preparation.

It will be a unique Book and an elaborate one, as it would run into many thousands of pages that would endeavour to explain each single verse of Ram Charit Manas in detail from different perspectives, with the aid of explanatory notes and references.

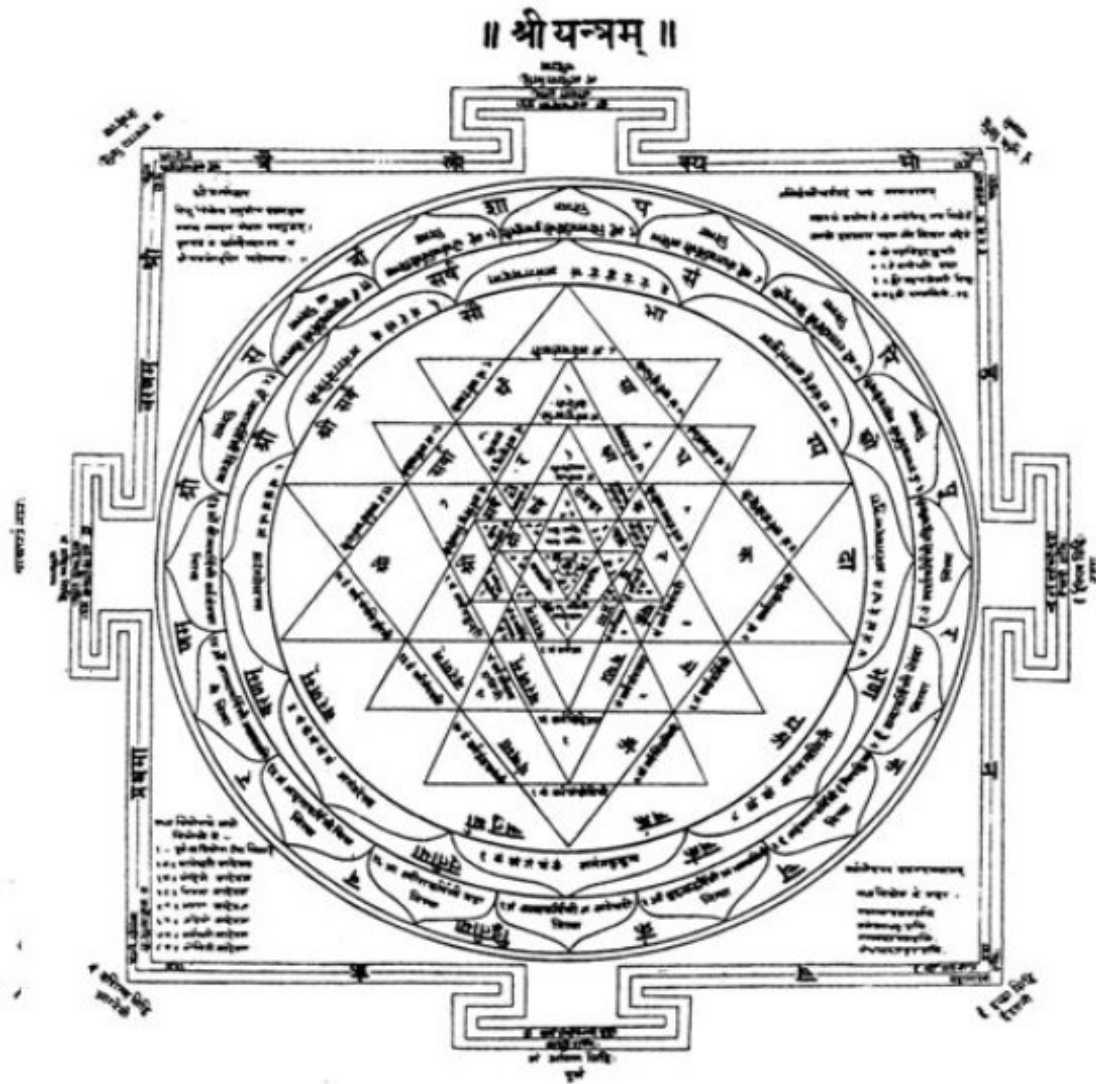
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Sri Ram Yantra



(Sri Ram Yantra/instrument for worship)

The 'Sri Yantra' used for worship of divine Goddess



(Sri Yantra/instrument for worship of Goddess)

DEDICATION

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO MY BELOVED LORD RAM

I dedicate this Book to Lord Sri Ram who is my dearest of dear, most beloved, the essence of my life and being, and for whom, and for whose pleasure, and on whose behest, and on whose divine mission, this book is dedicated.

Nothing that I write is of my own creation. It is the Lord who is getting it done. So I deserve no credit. However, being an ordinary man like the rest of us, I may have committed errors, and for those I beg forgiveness. I hope this book will help to continue the great tradition of singing the glories of the different aspects of same indivisible one Divinity in order to meet diverse needs of the Soul, the Spirit, one such being to find peace and happiness amidst the surrounding turmoil of the world by being able to spend some time in the thoughts of the Divine Being, the same 'Parmatma', the same Lord known by different names in different tongues.

I submit this effort at the holy feet of my beloved Lord Ram, and surely also to Lord Hanuman who was very dear to the Lord and an incarnation of Lord Shiva himself, with this humble little prayer that comes to my lips: 'Lord God; Glorious and Blessed be Thy Name. I yield Thee my most hearty thanks and reverential gratitude that Thou hast given me the honour and the privilege and the opportunity to serve Thee and fulfil Thy desire to spread Thine Good Word for the good and welfare of the human kind through the Books Thou hast got written through these humble hands of mine. And for that mercy and graciousness of Thee, I shall ever and for ever remain Thine grateful and thankful and obliged.'

I hope the reader will find my book useful and interesting. Since English is an international language, this book will help the English speaking world to access this masterpiece of classical Indian scriptural text.

*"He leadeth me! O blessed tho't!
O words with heav'nly comfort fraught!
What-e'er I do, wher-e'er I be,
Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me!" [A Hymn by: Joseph Henry Gilmore in 1862.]*

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia
Author